Historic Child Rhymes

Dwight Edwards Marvin

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To the Reverend

Rockwell S. Brank, D.D,

with the personal esteem and

love of the author.

Dwight E. Marvin.

HISTORIC CHILD RHYMES

BY DWIGHT EDWARDS MARVIN

NOVELS

The Christman
Professor Slagg of London
The Harksborough Committee

POETRY

Devotional Lyrics

Sunset Thoughts
The Wonderful City
The Passing of the Caravans
The Castle of the Soul
The Chariot of God
Cloud Islands
The Highlands of the Sky
The Looming Cross
The Wings of Time

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Historic Child Rhymes
Curiosities in Proverbs
The Antiquity of Proverbs

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Winning Souls
The Church and Her Prophets
How to Excel
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Common-Sense Parents

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Historic Child Rhymes

A Monograph on the Origin
and Growth of the Rhymes
That Children Use and Love

BY

Dwight Edwards Marvin

Norwell Massachusetts
The Ross Bookmakers
1930

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IF we are to consider that the condition of the human mind at any particular juncture is worth studying, it is certainly of importance to hear on what food its infancy is fed.

John Hill Burton

FOREWORD

THIS book was originally prepared as a lecture, and the contents were in part delivered as one of a series of addresses on Folk-lore to a men's club. The fervor with which the lecture was received has led the author to revise and enlarge the work, and present it to the public that it may furnish instruction and entertainment to others.

Acknowledgment of indebtedness for assistance is gladly given to the late Rev. Perez D. Cowan of Summit, N. J., who furnished the author with material regarding «Mother Goose,» and to Mr. Wilbur Macey Stone of East Orange, N. J., who gave him valuable help in lines of research.

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Historic
Child Rhymes

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

NEARLY three thousand years ago Solomon asked, «Is there a thing whereof it may be said, 'See, this is new'?» Answering his own question, he declared that «It hath been long ago in the ages which were before us.»

If nothing seemed new to the wise King of Israel, it should not be thought strange that the rhymes of today were used by children and their care-takers in the far-distant past.

CHILDREN of England and America know that the rhymes they learned in the nurseries and on the playgrounds were familiar to their parents and perhaps to their grandparents, but they have no conception of their antiquity; they do not realize that, like proverbs, these rhymes were repeated centuries ago and have been handed down by one generation to another, never growing old with use.

Some of them, it may be, came into existence during political and social upheavals of which there is no record, others were probably born of forgotten historical events and still others are but remnants of old songs and ballads now lost. Many of them throw light on the history and manners of people who lived in the distant past. The origin of a few is so remote that it is impossible to tell the date of their birth; for they existed at a time of which there is no authentic record of what was happening among the children of men.

MORE striking than their antiquity is the fact that nearly all now used in the nurseries and on the playgrounds of England and America are of foreign origin. Because they have not been repeated, so far as may be discovered, for generations, perhaps for centuries, one cannot assume that they first came into use here; for on examination it will be found that in most cases they were used hundreds of years ago, were neglected perhaps for a time and then came back into popular favor, the new world being the restorer of that which the old world had forgotten.

IT is generally assumed that all children's rhymes were originally formed and repeated by the peasant classes, but this is not true. So far as may be learned they were composed, not by boys and girls for their own use, but by adults who belonged to the intelligent classes, and in many cases were not intended for children.

◆

"WHY," it may be asked, "do our children prefer ancient, absurd and trivial doggerel to modern well-formed and sensible rhymes?"

No better answer to this question can be given than that which Mr. Halliwell-Phillips suggests when he says that "There is contained in some of these traditional rhymes a meaning and a romance, possibly intelligible only to very young minds, that exercise an influence on the fancy of children.

Furthermore he reminds us that «The absurdity and frivolity of a rhyme may naturally be its chief attractions to the very young; and there will be something lost from the imagination of that child whose parents insist so much on matters of fact that the 'cow' must be made, in compliance with the rules of their educational code, to jump 'under' instead of 'over' the moon, while of course the 'dog' must be considered as 'barking' and not 'laughing' at the circumstance.

«The nursery rhyme,» he continues, «is the novel and light reading of the infant scholar. It occupies with respect to the a-b-c's the position of a romance which relieves the mind from the cares of a riper age.

«It is obvious that there must exist something of this kind; for no modern compositions are found to supply altogether the place of the ancient doggerel.»

❧

"Mother Goose"

"MOTHER GOOSE"

THE well-known collection of rhymes attributed to «Mother Goose» has been held in high esteem by children for many years. Though containing absurd and trivial doggerel, it has become a nursery classic and a joy to parents, as they watch the wonder look of their little ones and listen to their peals of merry laughter over the strange behavior of «Jack and Jill,» «Simple Simon» and «Old Mother Hubbard's» dog.

Though the collection is said to have been written by «Mother Goose,» few people take the trouble to inquire whether any such person ever lived. Many of the rhymes that are attributed to her are certainly of great antiquity, so that if there ever was such a person she could have composed but few, if any, of them.

FOR centuries «Mother Goose [Ma mère l'Oie]» has been known in France as a legendary old woman, author of all fairy tales, and «Stories by Mother Goose [Contes de ma mère l'Oie]» is a proverbial expression applying to all sorts of nonsensical tales.

Under this title, in 1697, Charles Perrault wrote his immortal collection, including «Sleeping Beauty,» «Red Riding Hood,» «Bluebeard,» «Puss in Boots,» «Cinderella,» «Riquet with the Tuft,» «Hop o' My Thumb,» and other stories, which have been translated into all languages.

THE crowned image of «La reine Pédauque,» with the foot of a swan or goose, is carved among the saints on early French churches. She was Berta, a French princess, wife of Ethelbert of Kent, whom she left to espouse the religious life. The title «Queen Goosefoot» has also been given to Bertha of Burgundy, cousin and wife of Robert the Pious, and Berthe «au grand pied,» mother of Charlemagne. The name, with its cluster of legends, is an echo from the goddess Berchta, who while on earth kept the foot of the «Swan-maiden,» a relic of her godhead which she could not lay aside. Some scholars try to identify her with «Mother Goose.»

That is, they try to fit the legends of «Mother Goose, who was always spinning and chatting,» to those of «Queen Goosefoot,» especially in the case of the mother of Charlemagne, immortalized in story and song as «Bertha the Spinner,» and the patroness of that branch of industry.

THUS the name of «Mother Goose» came into England from France. It was well known in old London in connection with the puppet shows so famous in the early part of the eighteenth century. One play, by Robert Powell, was entitled «Mother Goose,» but that may have been subsequent to a toy-book bearing the same name.

Many persons claim that the original «Mother Goose's Melodies» was put on the market in London in 1760 by John Newberry, friend of Oliver Goldsmith, Tobias Smollet and Dr. Samuel Johnson, and the first publisher of a regular series of juvenile literature. It is generally thought that Oliver Goldsmith's literary labors for Newberry were in the nature of hack-work, as he frequently needed money for the necessities of life. However that may be, Goldsmith's pen was never used in vain, and his stories for children were appreciated by both old and young. He may have been the author of «Goody Two Shoes,» and his help in making Newberry's «Mother Goose's Melodies» a success is certainly worthy of commendation.

Toy-books are among the most perishable of publications, so that it is no wonder that not a single copy of the so-called first edition of «Mother Goose» is known to exist.

❧

WHILE many persons give John Newberry the credit of introducing «Mother Goose» to the public, many others believe that «Mother Goose» was not a mere title, but a real woman. In support of this they declare that in the early years of our country one William Foster emigrated from England to America on the ship «Hercules.» After he had lived here twenty-seven years at Charlestown, Massachusetts, a daughter, whom he named Elizabeth, was born to him.

Elizabeth became the second wife of Isaac Goose of Boston January 5, 1692.

Her husband's family name was probably Vergoose or Vertigoose, which he or his father abbreviated to Goose. A few years later Elizabeth joined the Old South Church of Boston, and when Isaac Goose died at the age of seventy-three, she went to live with her eldest daughter, who had married a Thomas Fleet.* Fleet had established himself as a printer in Boston in 1713, and kept a shop on Pudding Lane, now Devonshire Street.

Elizabeth was called «Grandmother Goose» in her new home. There she watched her daughter's children and amused them with quaint rhymes, singing as she went about the house,

---

*The record in the Boston City Registrar's office shows that on June 8, 1715, Thomas Fleet and Elizabeth Goose were married by the Reverend Cotton Mather.

"Upstairs, downstairs,
In my lady's chamber."

Where she learned her rhymes is unknown. She could at best have been the author of but few of them. Memories of jingles that she had heard in childhood probably furnished her with most of those she sang.

THOMAS FLEET, we are told, was a quiet man, and being annoyed at his mother-in-law's continual singing, tried in vain to dissuade her. Being a printer of pamphlets for booksellers and also a publisher of ballads as well as books for small children, he then conceived the idea of giving her rhymes to the public, and in 1719 published them under the title «Songs for the Nursery, or Mother Goose's Melodies for Children.» Afterward, in 1737, he had the honor of publishing the oldest existing copy of «The New England Primer.»

Elizabeth Goose lived twenty years after that, and died at the advanced age of ninety-two. She was buried in the Old Granary Burying Ground of Boston, where her grave is now shown.* On March 25, 1757, Ann Vergoose was appointed administratrix of the goods and estate of her mother Elizabeth.†

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*In that burying ground a marker, "Said to be Mother Goose," is placed at the grave of the first wife of Isaac Goose, Mary, who died in 1690. It undoubtedly belongs at Elizabeth's grave.

†These data have led to much controversy. W. H. Whitmore claims it is absurd to consider Elizabeth as the original "Mother Goose"; also that the

collection was translated for Newberry and therefore predates his publication. The very existence of Fleet's book has been denied, although his great-grandson John Fleet Eliot accepts it; and Isaac Thomas, who may be regarded as "The American Newberry," says in his "History of Printing" that Fleet was in his day the putative compiler of "Mother Goose's Melodies," which is a strong testimony. In the Monroe and Francis edition of the rhymes the editor, while tracing their origin to old England, declares that Thomas Fleet published the first reprint of the work in 1719 and intimates that he had seen a well-worn copy with Fleet's imprint on the title page.

Counting-Out Rhymes

COUNTING-OUT RHYMES

VARIOUS ways have been adopted of deciding who in a group of children should be «it» or «out» at the beginning of a game. One of the most common methods is by means of what is known as a counting-out rhyme.

In the long ago, each child in a group put one of his fingers in a hat. Then the fingers were counted off as the rhyme was recited, one word to each finger. When the last word was spoken, the boy or girl whose finger was indicated withdrew. In this manner the children were one by one excluded until only one finger remained in the hat and its possessor was declared «it.»

Though the hat is not now used, the bits of doggerel remain and are recited as of old. How ancient counting-out rhymes are is uncertain. Some persons think that they formed part of the rites of the old Druids, but the evidence is not sufficient to establish such an assumption. Whoever may have first employed them, they have been useful to children for many centuries.

OFTEN these rhymes are meaningless today. Whether they were so when first recited or if they have been greatly changed no one can tell. In all cases their usefulness remains; and their mystery often lends them charm.

Here are two that no one can explain:

ONE-ERY, two-ery, Ziccary Zan;
Hollow-bone, crack-a-bone, nine-ery, ten;
Spittery spot, it muſt be done;
Twiddle-um, twaddle-um, twenty-one.

ONE-ERY, two-ery, Hickary Hum;
Fillison, Fallason, Nicholas, John;
Queery, quary, Virgin Mary;
Singalum, sangalum, buck.

and one that is perfectly clear:

MONKEY, monkey, bottle of beer,
How many monkeys are there here?
Four and twenty, that's enough:
O-U-T spells out.

AT LEAST a thousand such rhymes, including variations, have been or are now in use, and possibly the number is far greater. Mr. Bolton collected and published eight hundred and seventy-three that are recited in various parts of the world. To show their comprehensiveness he says that there are in them «pithy references to rural and domeſtic scenes,» and to many employments such as driving cattle, shaving pigs, catching and cooking fish, hunting, horseshoeing, sweeping, knitting socks, spinning flax and silk, washing dishes, baking puddings and brewing ale.

We hear further of a great variety of domeſtic animals, as horses, asses, cows, dogs, squirrels, cats, mice, geese, ducks, parrots and black hens which lay eggs for gentlemen.

NURSERY rhymes have often been used or adapted for counting-out purposes. Not infrequently they have been borrowed without change, in which case a counting-out sentence is generally added, as «O-U-T spells out,» or «Out goes (s)he,» or «You're out.»

Sometimes they are slightly changed:

GREAT A, little a,
Bouncing B:
The cat's in the cupboard
And out goes s-he.

The following is probably remodeled from some ancient nursery jingle:

INTRY, mintry, cutry, corn,
Apple seeds and apple thorn;
Wire, brier, limber lock:
Four geese in a flock.
One flew east and one flew west
And one flew over the cuckoo's nest
Crying, "One, two, three,
Out goes s-he."

While many counting-out rhymes have their source in the doggerel which amused children in bygone ages, not a few are derived from ancient superstitions, and still others from historic events. Occasionally they refer to historic personages and even to Bible characters, yet it may be said to the credit of boys and girls of all lands and all times that they are never profane.

FEW have a fixed form, but undergo slight changes when used in different countries or sections.

Two familiar quatrains may be cited:

BUTTER, eggs, cheese, bread;
Hit a nigger on the head;
If he hollers, hit him dead:
Butter, eggs, cheese, bread.

EENY, meeny, miny, mo;
Catch a nigger by the toe;
When he hollers let him go:
Eeny, meeny, miny, mo.

Game Rhymes in the Nursery

GAME RHYMES IN THE NURSERY

GAME rhymes are closely associated with counting-out rhymes. Some are recited by children for themselves, others are recited by mothers and nurses for the amusement of their little ones. Among the most common are «Patty-Cake,» «This Little Pig» and «Ride a Cock-Horse.»

PATTY-CAKE, PATTY-CAKE, BAKER'S MAN!

THIS well-known jingle was certainly used in the seventeenth century, probably also in the sixteenth, and is recited with the pinching or touching of the baby's fingers or toes, or by clapping its little hands together. It usually runs:

PATTY-CAKE, patty-cake, baker's man!
That I will, master, as fast as I can.
Pick it and prick it and mark it with T,
And there'll be enough for baby and me.

The first line may read «pat-a-cake» or «clap-a-cake,» and the other three ring endless changes based on the words as printed above and the following:

Knead it and bake it as fast as you can
So I do, master, as fast as I can
Stick it and prick it and mark it with B
And throw it i' t'oven for Tommy and me
And put it in the oven for baby and me
And toss it in t'oven for Jack and me

The word «patty» is a diminutive of «pastry,» and the patty-cake of olden times was not unlike a small pie made with veal, venison or some other meat.

Thomas W. Talley of Fisk University gives an amusing variation used by the negroes of the South:

Patty-cake, patty-cake, bigger baker man!
Missus'n Mosser gwineter ketch'm if dey can
Put de li'l nigger in Mosser's dish pan
'N' scrub 'im off good fer de ol' san' man.

THIS LITTLE PIG WENT TO MARKET

THE «little pig» nursery game played by a mother or nurse, touching or pinching the baby's fingers or toes, rarely fails to please the little one as she recites:

This little pig went to market;
This little pig stayed at home;
This little pig had roast beef;
This little pig had none;
This little pig cried "Wee, wee,
wee," all the way home.

As might be expected, the lines have many renderings. One runs:

THIS little pig said, "I like red wheat."
This little pig said, "Where did you
get it from?"
This little pig said, "Out of Daddy's barn."
This little pig said, "I'll tell."
This little pig said, "Wee, wee, wee,
I can't get over the barn door-sill."

Mr. Gover tells us of another game played with the baby's fingers and recited in the same way, which has probably never reached beyond Coorg, and goes:

THE little finger nail is small;
The finger for the ring is gold;
The middle finger loveth corns;
The fourth is called Kotera;
The thumb is Mirutika;
And both are gone for cheese.
Count the little fingers and those
that bear the ring:

Middle fingers, forefingers and the
thumbs are ten.

RIDE A COCK-HORSE

FOUR forms are here given of the rhyme for this game, which is played by bouncing the baby on the knee and singing:

RIDE a cock-horse to Banbury Cross
To see an old lady on a white horse.
Rings on her fingers and bells on her toes,
She shall make music wherever she goes.
RIDE a cock-horse to Banbury Cross
To see what Tommy can buy:
A penny white loaf, a penny white cake
And a twopenny apple pie.
RIDE a cock-horse to Banbury Cross
To buy little Johnny a galloping horse.
It trots behind and it ambles before,
And Johnny shall ride till he can ride no more.
RIDE a cock-horse to Coventry Cross
To see what Emma can buy:

A penny white cake I'll buy for her sake
And a twopenny tart or a pie.

Sometimes the term «cock-horse» was used to designate a child's rocking-horse. It was also applied to a horse on which two persons were riding.

BANBURY in Oxfordshire, England, was well known in days of old as a congregating place for Puritans. As the Puritans were strict in their manner of living and condemned all popular amusements and display in dress, it is not strange that the term «Banbury man» became a nickname for one who indulged in «worldly pleasures» or clothed himself in striking attire. The town was also famous for cakes, ale, cheese, toy-books, children's histories, chap-books, battledores, children's books, and so on.

Rusher, in his day a printer in the town, has in his "Types" these verses:

Good things to engross
Near Banbury Cross,
Where Tommy shall go on the nag.
He makes no mistake;
Buy a Banbury cake,
Books, pictures and Banbury sag.

In the latter part of Queen Elizabeth's reign an effort was made to revive the religious pageants that had been discontinued in Banbury; but when they came to the high cross the Puritans resisted the performers, and in the tussle which followed the high cross and two smaller crosses were pulled down and broken to pieces. The rhyme "Ride a cock-horse" may possibly have been repeated at the time as a taunt at the Puritans.

IF any one desires to go to Banbury, he has but to remember an old rhyme from Rusher's «Penny Book» for direction:

> SING see-saw, Jack thatching the ridge,
> Which is the way to Banbury bridge?
> One foot up and t'other foot down,
> And that is the way to Banbury town.

WHETHER or not the people of Banbury were more stupid than others is uncertain. Two proverbs seem to lead to that conclusion, «As wise as the mayor of Banbury who would prove that Henry III. was before Henry II.» and «Like Banbury tinkers, who in stopping one hole make two.» It is more than probable that, like the jeers which were aimed at Gothamites in olden days, the taunts which ridiculed the inhabitants of Banbury were wholly unjustified. At least one of their number had business sagacity, according to Rusher's rhyme:

AS I was going to Banbury
Upon a summer's day,
My dame had butter, eggs and fruit,
And I had corn and hay.
Joe drove the ox and Tom the swine,
Dick took the foal and mare;
I sold them all,- then home to dine
From Banbury Fair.

Rusher's «Galloping Guide to A–B–C,» which tells us what each letter of the alphabet stands for, after the usual manner of a–b–c books, declares that «S – Shining Sun – is Banbury Arms.»

AMONG the York street venders of those days of old, we find one who carried cakes about with him and offered them for sale with the cry:

COME buy my nice muffins!
Hot muffins and crumpets, too,
For breakfast and for tea.
I've only a very few left
In my basket, as you may see.

The cries of York were collected, illustrated and printed by one T. Kendrew of Collier Gate, York. They differed somewhat from those heard on the streets of London. The cuts used to illustrate Kendrew's book were afterward carried to Banbury and appeared in the «Chap-Book of Banbury Cries.» In that chapbook the following rhyme was appended to the York muffin vender's call:

BUY Banbury cakes! By fortune's frown
You see this needy man
Along the street and up and down
Is selling all he can.

Game Rhymes Among Older Children

GAME RHYMES AMONG OLDER CHILDREN

TWO BLACKBIRDS

CHILDREN in olden times, as now, sought to mystify their elders by putting ink spots or bits of paper on the nail of each forefinger. Then, placing the finger thus marked on the edge of a table with the other fingers turned under, they would throw their hands over their shoulders and bring them down again on the table with the second finger exposed, which of course was unmarked. This throwing the hands up and bring-ing them down was repeated again and again, showing the nail that was marked and then one that was unmarked. While performing this child's sleight-of-hand trick or game, these lines were repeated:

THERE were two blackbirds
Sitting on a hill,
The one named Jack,
The other named Jill.
Fly away, Jack!
Fly away, Jill!
Come again, Jack!
Come again, Jill!

or perhaps these:

TWO little blackbirds sat upon a wall,
One named Peter, one named Paul.
Fly away, Peter! Fly away, Paul!
Come again, Peter! Come again, Paul!

The game dates back at least to the middle of the eighteenth century and was probably played long before that period.

There is a still more ancient form now seldom if ever used, running thus:

THERE were two birds sitting on a stone,
Fa, la, la, la, lal, de.
One flew away, and then there was one,
Fa, la, la, la, lal, de.
The other flew after, and then there were none,
Fa, la, la, la, lal, de.
And so the poor stone was left alone,
Fa, la, la, la, lal, de.

PEASE PORRIDGE HOT

"PEASE Porridge Hot" is played by two children, who sit facing each other and strike their hands together and against their knees as they recite:

PEASE porridge hot,
Pease porridge cold,
Pease porridge in the pot
Nine days old.

The game has a never-ending charm to boys and girls, for they repeat the rhyme, accompanied by hand clapping, again and again with shouts of laughter.

Sometimes this catch-line is added:

Spell "that" with four letters.

SALLY WATERS

THE game of «Sally Waters» is probably one of the oldest child games in existence. It is supposed to date back to pagan times, and subsequently gave rise to the well-known cotillion dance. The fact that it is also related to the old «Cushion Dance» connected with weddings leads to the conclusion that the game had its origin in the rites of some unknown heathen marriage celebration. Its interest to students is found in its probable antiquity.

In playing it, a girl seats herself or kneels in the center of a circle of boys and girls, with her face covered by her hands as though she were disconsolate. Her companions then move round her singing:

Sally Waters, Sally Waters,
sprinkle in the pan,
For down in the meadows
there lies a young man.
Rise, Sally! Rise, Sally!

She rises; and the group, still moving round her, continues:

And don't you look so sad,
For you shall have a husband, good or bad.
Choose you one, choose you two,
Choose the fairest you can see.

Now the encircling group of boys and girls ceases to move, and she chooses one of them. They move again and sing:

Now you are married, I wish you good joy:
First a girl and then a boy.
Seven years now and seven to come:
Take her and kiss her and send her home.

After the kissing, the chosen one goes into the center of the circle, and the formula is repeated.

The song itself has many variations. Here are some of them:

Sally, Sally Waters, sprinkle in the pan!
Rise, Sally, rise, and choose a young man.
Choose - or bow - to the East,
Choose - or bow - to the West,
- or Choose for the best one,
Choose for the worst one, -
Choose the young man - or pretty girl -
that you love best.

Little Sally Waters, sitting in the sun,
Crying, sighing, for her lover to come.
Rise, Sally, rise,

Wipe the tears out from your eyes,
Turn to the east,
Turn to the west,
Turn to the one that you love best.

ROUND THE MULBERRY BUSH

"ROUND the Mulberry (or Bramble) Bush» is a favorite game among children, who sing the words as they imitate the actions to which they refer:

HERE we go round the mulberry bush,
The mulberry bush, the mulberry bush,-
Here we go round the mulberry bush
On a cold and frosty morning.

This is the way we wash our hands,
Wash our hands, wash our hands,-
This is the way we wash our hands
On a cold and frosty morning.

This is the way we do our hair, etc.
This is the way we go to church, etc.

Other stanzas include many familiar

occupations of daily life, as washing and ironing clothes, mending, scrubbing the floor, sweeping, duſting, baking bread and visiting friends.

«So early in the morning» is often subſtituted for «On a cold and froſty morning,» and sometimes the rhyme is put in the form of a play showing the duties done «So early Monday morning» and on each morning of the week.

LONDON BRIDGE IS BROKEN DOWN

THIS rollicking game is well known to children, but very few persons realize its great age. Perhaps no juvenile game is more popular in the poorer districts of our great cities, neither is there any game the hiſtory of which is more difficult to trace. It is mentioned by Rabelais (about A. D. 1533) under the name of «The Fallen Bridge,» printed in Ritson's «Gammer Gurton's Garland» in the middle of the sixteenth century, and in more recent times referred to in Mr. Halliwell-Phillips' «Nursery Rhymes of England,» Mr. William W. Newell's «Games and Songs of American Children» and many other studies in folklore. Mr. Newell gives considerable space to the game, commenting on it extensively.

Some scholars think that it is mythological in its origin. This seems to be indicated by the imagined difficulty in reconstruction which could have been caused, it is claimed, by the antagonism of unseen powers of good and evil. In olden times a certain sanctity was attached to bridge construction, not only because bridges were the only means of connecting districts separated by water, but also because the devil was supposed to preside over the land and to detest bridges. Therefore to build a bridge was to outwit the Prince of Darkness.

The ballad used in playing it has undergone many changes during the centuries. It may have taken its present form at some time in the remote past when London Bridge was in ruin, but the roots of the song seem prehistoric, whether or not the game finds its source in ancient Northern Mythology, as has been assumed by some German students.

The stanzas quoted below are taken from Dr. Edward P. Rimbault's version found in «Leisure Hours,» January, 1876. Dr. Rimbault compared many forms before adopting this rendering. The words «Over my Lady Lea» seem to refer to the river Lea, which joins the Thames at Blackwall below the Isle of Dogs.

LONDON BRIDGE is broken down,
- Dance over my Lady Lea -
London Bridge is broken down
- With a gay ladie.

How shall we build it up withal?
- Dance over my Lady Lea -
Build it up with iron and ſteel
- Dance over my Lady Lea.

Iron and ſteel will bend and bow;
- Dance over my Lady Lea -
Build it up with wood and clay
- Dance over my Lady Lea.

Wood and clay will wash away;
- Dance over my Lady Lea -
Build it up with silver and gold
- Dance over my Lady Lea.

Silver and gold will be stolen away;
- Dance over my Lady Lea -
Then we must set a man to watch
- Dance over my Lady Lea.

Suppose the man should fall asleep?
- Dance over my Lady Lea -
Then we must put a pipe in his mouth
- Dance over my Lady Lea.

Suppose the pipe should fall and break?
- Dance over my Lady Lea -
Then we must set a dog to watch
- Dance over my Lady Lea.

Suppose the dog should run away?
- Dance over my Lady Lea -
Then we must chain him to a post
- Dance over my Lady Lea.

Build it up with stone so strong,
- Dance over my Lady Lea -
Huzza! 't will last for ages long
- With a gay ladie.

Tale Rhymes

TALE RHYMES

A VAST number of children's rhymes have some kind of story to tell. Many of them are trivial and absurd; others have a peculiar interest because of their connection with old-time customs or historic happenings.

MR. HALLIWELL-PHILLIPS tells us that the practice of hiding from the baby and then reappearing is as old as the human race. While this may be true, there was a time when it was done without reciting the rhyme of our forebears:

Bo-Peep, little Bo-Peep,
Now's the time for hide and seek.

LITTLE BO-PEEP

FOR many centuries the term «Bo-Peep» has in some way been connected with sheep, but no one has been able to tell how Bo-Peep's sheep became tailless or when the story of the little shepherdess first came into use. It can be traced back for several centuries, and that is all. The whole story seems to be complete in the following five stanzas:

LITTLE BO-PEEP has lost her sheep
And can't tell where to find them;
Leave them alone, and they'll come home
And bring their tails behind them.

Little Bo-Peep fell fast asleep
And dreamed she heard them bleating;
But when she awoke, she found it a joke,
For still they all were fleeting.

Then up she took her little crook,
Determined for to find them.
She found them indeed, but it made
her heart bleed,
For they'd left all their tails behind 'em.

It happened one day, as Bo-Peep did stray
Into a meadow hard by,
There she espied their tails side by side,
All hung on a tree to dry.

She heav'd a sigh and wiped her eye,
And over the hillocks went stamp-o,
And tried what she could, as a
shepherdess should,
To tack again each to rump-o.

The second and fourth lines of the last stanza are also given:

And ran o'er hill and dale-o,
To tack to each sheep its tail-o.

SHAKESPEARE, in the tragedy of «King Lear,» makes the fool sing:

THEN they for sudden joy did weep
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep
And go the fools among.

An old ballad, probably written during the reign of Henry VII. (A. D. 1485-1509) and considered by some a satire against the order of mendicant friars, contains the following stanza:

HALFE Englande ys nowght now but shepe;
In everye corner they playe boe-pepe.
Lorde, them confownde by twentye and ten
And fyll their place with Cristen men.

Mr. Halliwell-Phillips gives us this anecdote, which he says was taken from a seventeenth-century manuscript:

RANDOLPH havinge not soe much as ferry money, sought out Ben Jonson; and comminge to a place in London where he and three more were drinkinge, peeps in at the chamber doore. Ben Jonson espyinge him said, "Come in, Jack Bo-Peepe." Randolph beinge very thirsty, it being then summer, and willinge to quench his thirst, promptly obeyed his command. The company dranke untill it came to five shillings. Every man drawinge his money, Randolph made this motion; viz., that he who made the first coppy of verses upon the reckoninge should goe scot-free. Ben and all the rest, beeinge poetts, readily consented. Randolph, surpassinge them in acuteness, utter'd forthwith the following:

I, JACK Bo-Peepe,
And you foure sheepe,
Lett every one yeelde his fleece.
Here's five shillinge,
If you are willinge,
That will be fifteene pence a-peece.

et sic impune evasit inops.

There is an old fancy that the term

«Bo-Peep» was derived from the noise made by little chickens when they leave their shells.

SIMPLE SIMON

THE story of «Simple Simon,» taken from an old Catnach chap-book, describes the activities of a half-witted youth. The nursery ballad runs:

SIMPLE SIMON met a pieman
Going to the fair.
Says Simple Simon to the pieman,
"Let me taste your ware."

Says the pieman to Simple Simon,
"Show me first your penny."
Says Simple Simon to the pieman,
"Indeed I have not any."

Simple Simon went to town
To buy a piece of meat;
He tied it to his horse's tail
To keep it clean and sweet.

Simple Simon went a-fishing
For to catch a whale,
And all the water he had got
Was in his mother's pail.
Simple Simon went to look
If plums grew on a thistle;
He pricked his fingers very much,
Which made poor Simon whistle.

The fair of medieval times was simply a gathering of buyers and sellers at an appointed place, creating a market for the goods of itinerant merchants.

The piemen of old London were well known. Eighty of them wandered about the city in summer and half as many in winter. Their solicitations for trade were constant, so that everyone became familiar with their common cry:

PIES, all hot! hot! hot!
Penny pies, all hot! hot!

Fruit, eel, beef, veal or kidney pies!
Pies, all hot! hot! hot!

Presumably all the pies that were sold on London streets were filled with the materials that the pieman claimed, but the street boys would have it otherwise, for they followed after the venders calling out «Meow!» or «Bow-wow-wow!»

«Sam Weller» in Dickens's «Pickwick Papers,» if he may be regarded as trustworthy, seems to have shared the opinion of the street boys, for we hear him soliloquizing:

WEAL pie, wery good thing is a weal pie when you know the lady as made it, and is quite sure it an't kittens; and arter all though, where's the odds, when they're so like weal that the wery piemen themselves don't know the difference?

❧

DING, DONG, BELL

ONE of the many versions of this little nursery elegy runs:

DING, dong, bell!
Pussy's in the well!
Who put her in?
Little Tommy Lin.
Who pulled her out?
Dog with long snout.
What a naughty boy was that
To drown poor pussy cat,
Who never did him any harm,
But killed the mice in his
father's barn.

Another version of the rhyme deprives the dog with a long snout of the honor of rescuing poor pussy and gives it to «Tommy Thin.» Still another gives it to «Johnny Stout.»

Both «Tommy Lin» or «Tom Lin,» as he is sometimes called, and «Johnny (or

Dickey) Stout» are names dating far back into history and are frequently mentioned in old ballads. «Tommy Lin,» we are informed, was a bald-headed Scotchman, but no description of «Johnny Stout» remains, as the name is only traditional. We find it, however, associated with the story of the old woman who forgot herself while sleeping in the open.

Shakespeare introduces this song in «The Merchant of Venice»:

Tell me, where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?
Reply, reply.
It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell;
I'll begin it, - Ding, dong, bell.

The Bard of Avon again refers to this nursery classic in «The Tempest,» where Ariel sings:

Ariel: Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Burthen: Ding, dong.
Ariel: Hark! Now I hear them, -
Ding, dong, bell.

OLD MOTHER HUBBARD

WHEN the comic adventures of «Old Mother Hubbard» and her dog appeared, probably for the first time, in a toy-book published in 1806, they at once became very popular. Nearly ten thousand copies were sold in a few months.

As there given, the tale contained fourteen stanzas, though the name «Mother Hubbard» and the first three stanzas were well known long before the beginning of the nineteenth century. Those first three stanzas comprise the whole story as originally repeated, and are as follows:

OLD Mother Hubbard
Went to the cupboard
To get her poor dog a bone,
But when she came there
The cupboard was bare,
And so the poor dog had none.

She went to the baker's
To buy him some bread,
But when she came back
The poor dog was dead.

She went to the joiner's
To buy him a coffin,

But when she came back
The poor dog was laughing.

Edmund Spenser (A. D. 1553-1599) wrote a political satire in his youth, adopting the style of Chaucer and entitling it «Prosopopoeia: or Mother Hubbard's Tale,» and Thomas Middleton published in 1604 «Father Hubbard's Tales,» but the name «Mother Hubbard» or «Old Mother Hubbard,» as well as «Father Hubbard,» was used before either Spenser or Middleton was born.

Another old rhyme closely resembling the «Mother Hubbard» story goes thus:

THERE was an old woman, and what
do you think?
She lived upon nothing but victuals
and drink!
Victuals and drink were the chief of
her diet.

The tiresome old woman could never
be quiet.
She went to the baker to buy her some
bread,
And when she came home her husband was dead.
She went to the clerk to toll the bell,
And when she came back her old husband was well.

JACK SPRATT

USUALLY the story of «Jack Spratt» is told in four lines, but the complete account of his adventures as given in old books takes one hundred and twenty-five lines and is at least two hundred and fifty years old. The lines as now quoted read:

JACK Spratt could eat no fat,
His wife could eat no lean;
And so betwixt them both, you see,
They licked the platter clean.

The whole ſtory is quite absurd, although intereſting. We are told that «Jack» was a young dwarf, smartly clad in a fine leather doublet and greasy hat. The girl whom he courted and afterward married was named «Joan Cole.»

JACK ate all the lean;
Joan ate all the fat;
The bone they picked clean,
Then gave it to the cat.

Though «Jack» showed considerable economy in the matter of food, when courting «Joan» he was generous enough to give her a groat to buy a patch for her petticoat, which had a hole in it.

When the two were married, the lane on which the church ſtood was too narrow to admit a coach, so «Jack» had to wheel his wife home from the wedding in a wheelbarrow. On the way he came to a bad stretch of road, where by some mischance the wheelbarrow turned over and dumped «Joan» into a ditch. Our hero was distracted till his bride called out that the ditch was dry and she was not drowned.

JACK brought home his Joan,
  And she sat in a chair,
When in came his cat
  That had got but one ear.
Says Joan, "I'm home, Puss,
  Pray, how do you do?"
The cat wagg'd her tail
  And said nothing but "Mew."

After many adventures and experiences «Jack» grew rich and went abroad with his wife, leaving the cat with one ear in charge of the house. The couple had two children, a boy and a girl.

JACK Spratt had a cat:
It had but one ear:
It went to buy butter
When butter was dear.

Whether this romantic story has any great antiquity is doubtful.

THREE CHILDREN SLIDING ON THE ICE

QUAINT, witty and deliciously awkward, this song is now a remnant.

THREE children sliding on the ice
All on a summer's day,
As it fell out, they all fell in;
The rest, they ran away.

Now had these children been at home
Or sliding on dry ground,
Ten thousand pounds to one penny
They had not all been drowned.

You parents all that children have
And you that have got none,
If you would have them safe abroad
Pray keep them safe at home.

The complete rhyme includes twenty-one ſtanzas and is said to recount a tragic incident that happened many years ago, when three children were drowned in the River Thames. The ſtory is found in a ballad dated 1633 and called «The Lamentation of a Bad Market, or The Drowning of Three Children on the River Thames.» The ballad is preserved in the Pepysian Collection. It is also found in «Choice Poems and Rare Pieces of Drollery,» published in 1662, and in Tom D'Urfey's collection of old songs entitled «Pills to Purge Melancholy,» published in 1719. The original rhyme begins:

COME Chriſtian people *all*, give ear
Unto the grief of us
Caused by the death of three children dear,
The which it hap'ned thus.

THE MAN IN THE MOON

IMMORTALIZED in doggerel dear to every English-speaking child,

THE man in the moon
Came tumbling down
or - Came down too soon
And asked his way to Norwich.

He went by the South
And burnt his mouth
With supping cold pease porridge
or - With eating hot pease porridge.

The moon, with its wonderful changes, has not only been an object of worship, but it has led to a multitude of legends, myths and superstitions. From it the old Norsemen wove their mythology, as is seen in the «Jack and Jill» rhyme; and our mediaeval forebears regarded it as partial to lovers:

LUNA, every woman's friend,

To me thy goodness condescend:
Let me this night in vision see
Emblems of my destiny.

Many young women in olden times used a mirror to catch the rays of the new moon, with the full assurance that by the number of reflections they could discover how many years would elapse before they should be married.

NEW moon, true tomorrow, be true
now to me,
That I tomorrow my true love may see.

Sometimes the old rhyme intimates that the man in the moon had a brother traveler from South Devon:

THE man in the moon came down too soon
To ask the way to Norwich;
The man of the South he burnt his mouth
By eating cold plum porridge.

The famous porridge seems not only to have attracted strangers, but to have been fairly well appreciated in Norwich itself.

THERE was an old woman of Norwich
Who lived upon nothing but porridge;
Parading the town,
She turned cloak into gown,
This thrifty old woman of Norwich.

An old ballad has a line in which the man in the moon is said to

SUP his sowens with a cutty-spoon,

which seems quite inadequate, considering his size, as the cutty-spoon of our ancestors was very small. Sowens is a dish common in Scotland, made of the flour recovered from the husks of oats.

Claret, an old record states, was his favorite beverage.

THE man in the moon drinks claret,
But he is dull Jack-a-Dandy;

Would he know a sheep's head from a carrot
He would learn to drink cider and brandy.

An old ballad says that «powder-beef, turnip and carrot» were also in his menu.

It may be interesting to learn something about who the man in the moon is supposed to be.

According to an old legend he is Isaac bearing a bundle of wood for his own sacrifice. In the twelfth century, however, he was commonly believed to be a rustic thief carrying off wood which he had stolen. An ancient document says he is the Sabbath-breaker mentioned in Numbers xv. 32-36 as gathering sticks on the seventh day. In Dante's «Inferno» he is Cain, the son of Adam, presenting thorns, the worst product of the soil, to God as a sacrifice.

Shakespeare is independent of these theories. In «The Tempest» he has:

Stephano: How now, moon-calf? how does thine ague?

Caliban: Hast thou not dropped from heaven?

Stephano: Out o' the moon, I do assure thee: I was the man i' the moon, when time was.

Caliban: I have seen thee in her, and I do adore thee: my mistress show'd me thee, and thy dog, and thy bush.

In «Midsummer Night's Dream» the role is taken by «Moonshine»:

Moonshine: All that I have to say is, to tell you that the lantern is the moon; I the man i' the moon, this thorn-bush my thorn-bush, and this dog my dog.

There is an old superstition that a dog can be seen in the moon. A bush is there too in both these quotations, and «Demetrius» answers «Moonshine»:

Demetrius: Why, all these should be in the lantern; for they are in the moon.

The ancient inhabitants of Northern Germany imagined that if one looked at the full moon carefully he would be able to see a man pouring water out of a pail,- an idea that evidently came from the old Scandinavian «Jack and Jill» myth. If then «Jack» is the real man in the moon, we have a sixth theory quite as unworthy of acceptance as the other five.

Whoever the man in the moon may be, it is certain that children of today have no trouble in seeing on the golden disk his good-natured face turned earthward or in tracing his form, bearing a bundle of sticks on his shoulder.

THREE BLIND MICE

A SONG rather than a child's rhyme, the old jingle «Three Blind Mice» has been adopted by the little ones and is now counted as belonging to the nursery. It runs:

THREE blind mice, see how they run!
They all ran after the farmer's wife,
Who cut off their tails with a carving knife.
Did you ever see such fools in your life?
Three blind mice!

It was written as early as the sixteenth century. Mr. Halliwell-Phillips has traced it back to a curious old music-book of 1609, where it is rendered:

THREE blind mice, three blind mice;
Dame Julian, the miller and his merry old
wife.
She scrapte her tripe, take thou the knife.

THE OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN A SHOE

MANY old nursery rhymes begin:

THERE was an old woman -

Here are fifteen endings of the line:

- and what do you think?
- as I've heard tell
- called "Nothing-at-all"
- had nothing
- her name it was Peg
- in Surrey
- lived under a hill
- of Leeds
- of Norwich
- sat spinning
- sold puddings and pies
- she went to church to pray
- tossed up in a basket
- who had three sons
- who lived in a shoe

The laſt is the moſt popular, though not the oldeſt, as it did not appear in print, so far as can be discovered, before

1783. Since that date it has retained its place as a children's favorite.

THERE was an old woman
who lived in a shoe,
She had so many children
she didn't know what to do;
She gave them some broth,
without any bread,
She whipped them all well
and put them to bed.

Another version appeared in 1797:

THERE was an old woman
and she lived in a shoe,
She had so many children
she didn't know what to do;
She crumm'd 'em some porridge
without any bread,
And she borrow'd a beetle,
And she knocked 'em o' th' head.

Lina Eckenstein quotes the following from Saxony:

FLY, chafer, fly:
Father has gone to the war;
Mother has crept into the shoe
And has broken her left leg.

In comment she says: «The expression 'creeping into a shoe' yields a clue to the nature of the woman of one of our rhymes who lived in a shoe and was oppressed by the number of her children.»

❦

Historical Rhymes

HISTORICAL RHYMES

TAFFY WAS A WELSHMAN

AMONG the most interesting rhymes connected with the historic past is the song of «Taffy,» which begins:

TAFFY was a wicked Welshman,
Taffy was a wicked thief;
Taffy came to my house
And stole a piece - or leg - of beef.

The rhyme was once a song of derision, which accounts for the insertion of the word «wicked,» now omitted.

It was the custom in old London for a crowd or mob of people to go through the principal streets of the city on St. David's Day (the first of March) carrying a dressed-up man. The crowd was followed by a large number of street boys, who sang or shouted this old jingle at the top of their voices in derision of the Welsh people. The rhyme was sung in other parts of old England also, particularly along the Welsh border.

The name «Taffy» comes from the Welsh «Taffid,» meaning «David,» and the procession was on the feast of the patron saint of Wales.

LITTLE JACK HORNER

RECENT London papers assert that «Little Jack Horner» was a real boy who lived in the Abbey of Glastonbury in the time of Henry VIII. When the campaign against monasteries began, the abbot, so the legend goes, sent the title deed to the king by little Jack Horner, who carefully concealed it in a pie, but «pulled out the plum» of the whole estate, the deed to the Manor of Mells, which still stays in the family, the present lord being Sir John (Jack) Horner.

LITTLE Jack Horner sat in a corner,
Eating a Christmas pie:
He put in his thumb and pulled out a plum,
And said, "What a good boy am I."

In the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the story covers many pages. It also forms part of an old chap-book history, and is in substance the same as «The Fryer and the Boy.» Both versions came from an older tale called «Jack and His Stepdame.» Henry Carey referred to this rhyme in 1720.

Like many another of the long ſtories in doggerel which amused former generations, it has been abbreviated until the above-quoted four lines alone survive as a nursery classic.

«Jack» is said to have been a dwarf thirteen inches in height and possessed of great beauty. One of the eleven ſtanzas of the original rhyme, however, describes him thus:

HE grew, I say, at any rate
Both proper, ſtraight and trim,
So that young Nancy, Sue and Kate
Were all in love with him.

Whether «Jack» really ever lived or not, the name, like that of «Tommy Tucker,» dates far back into hiſtory, and was frequently used in rhyme and ſtory as suited the convenience of authors. Its early use has been entirely forgotten, but the taunt it contained was in some way closely connected with old-time affairs, probably with some matter of history.

The rhyme became popular in England at the time the pleasure-hating Puritans came into power. Its early form shows the strong popular feeling against them. They opposed and abhorred all the amusements and merry-makings that the common folk had enjoyed under the Tudor sovereigns, and many persons retaliated with satirical rhymes and wit. There was often justification for these strictures on popular amusements. Many extremely favored revels were decidedly objectionable, if not immoral, and were growing worse every year. The error of the Puritans was in not discriminating, but putting all kinds of pleasure alike under the ban. They closed theatres and public gardens, and waged bitter war on fairs, festivals, church music, may-poles, puppet shows and dancing, condemning all equally as the works of the devil.*

The «Jack Horner» rhyme came into

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*We are apt to forget the noble deeds of the English Puritans and their conscientious purpose to purify the political, social and religious life of the nation and recall only their mistaken efforts. Though they went to extremes in their condemnation of innocent pleasures, their high ideals and strong moral purposes bore fruit, so that when Puritanism came to a close in England it appeared again, as Professor James Stalker reminds us, in a new religious fervor in Holland, preparing the way for a higher standard of living, then showed itself in Germany in the great Moravian movement for missions, then went back to England in the Methodist Revival, and finally passed into Scotland with a fresh impetus of religious zeal.

favor as a satire on the Puritans for their dislike of Chriſtmas pies. In fact, once in power, the Puritans tried to change the holiday itself from a day of feaſting to a day of faſting, but the people rebelled and the effort was unsuccessful.

THE high-shoe lords of Cromwell's making
Were not for dainties, - roaſted, baking;
The cheapeſt food they found moſt good in.

It is small wonder that so rigorous a sect despised Chriſtmas pies, if they contained what at leaſt one is said to have contained; for the «Newcaſtle Chronicle» of January 6, 1720, declared that such a pie was made for Sir Henry Grey that included «two bushels of flour, twenty pounds of butter, four geese, two turkeys, two rabbits, four wild ducks, two woodcocks, six snipes and four partridges, two neats' tongues, two curlews, seven blackbirds and six pigeons.»

Chriſtmas pies of olden times were not all thus made, but were like modern mince pies, although much larger and formed in an oblong shape to be emblematic of the Child Jesus' manger bed; while the plum pudding, which always accompanied the Chriſtmas pie, was also intended to be symbolical, its ingredients being emblematic of the offerings of the Three Kings to the Infant Redeemer.

«There are a number of men and women,» says Percy B. Green, «who recall a time when the rhymes of 'Jack Horner' and 'Jack the Giant Killer' appeared finer than anything in Shakespeare, but this much may be said for 'Jack Horner,' that the Cavaliers' song of derision at the ſtrait-laced Puritans soon loſt its political signification and gradually became used as a mark of respect.»

OLD KING COLE

BECAUSE of its possible association with very ancient times, the ballad of «Old King Cole» acquires an added charm among hiſtoric child rhymes.

OLD King Cole
Was a merry old soul
And a merry old soul was he;
He called for his pipe,
He called for his bowl,
And he called for his fiddlers three.
Every fiddler he had a fiddle
And a very fine fiddle had he.
Twee tweedle dee, tweedle dee, went
the fiddlers.
Oh, there's none so rare
As can compare
With King Cole and his fiddlers three.

According to ancient records, somewhat traditional, King Cole reigned in Britain in the third century. Robert of Gloucester tells us in a curious old metrical history that he was the successor of Asclepiod and father of St. Helena, the mother of Constantine, the first Christian emperor. King Cole is said to have been brave and popular.

Whether or not any reliance can be placed on Robert of Gloucester's chronicle, it is certain that the nursery rhyme is purely traditional. To speak of a pipe in the third century is an anachronism.

The fiddlers and their fates are supposed to be described in these verses:

THE first he was a miller,
The second he was a weaver,
The third he was a tailor,

And all were rogues together.
The miller he stole corn,
The weaver he stole yarn,
The little tailor he stole broadcloth
To keep these three rogues warm.
The miller was drowned in his dam,
The weaver was hung in his loom,
The devil ran away with the little
tailor
With the broadcloth under his arm.

An old Suffolk version has the same words, substituting «a hen» for «the devil» and prefacing the doggerel thus:

WHEN good King Arthur reigned,
He was a very good king;
He kicked three men right out o'
the room
A-cases they wouldna sing.

THE KILKENNY CATS

KILKENNY cats are as famous as the cats of Cheshire. The sad end of two of them is commemorated in lines beloved of children and having some historic background, though one of much later date than those connected with «Little Jack Horner» or «Old King Cole.»

THERE were two cats of Kilkenny;
Each thought there was one cat too
many,
So they fought and they fit,
They scratched and they bit
Till, excepting their nails
And the tips of their tails,
Instead of two cats there wa'n't any.

Mr. J. D. White, writing on the subject in the «Kilkenny Moderator,» says that when the Hessians were quartered in Kilkenny, they amused themselves by tying two cats together by their tails and then, after throwing them over a line, letting them fight. Their superior officer, hearing of the cruel practice, ordered it stopped, but the Hessians, being fond of diversion, watched their chance, and when the officer was absent continued the sport. One day when the soldiers had strung two cats together and flung them over a line, they heard the officer approaching. One of the group quickly cut down the cats, leaving their tails hanging to the rope. The officer, seeing the tails, asked what had become of the cats. Thereupon one of the troopers explained that they had fought so furiously that they had eaten each other up, - all except their tails.

«Whether the story is true or not, it is certain,» says Mr. Brewer, «that the municipalities of Kilkenny and Irishtown contended so stoutly about their respective boundaries and rights to the end of the seventeenth century that they mutually impoverished each other, leaving little else than 'two tails' behind.»

THREE WISE MEN OF GOTHAM

CELEBRATED in four lines that form one of the shortest complete stories in the English language, the adventure of three wise men of Gotham has a secure place in nursery anthology.

THREE wise men of Gotham
Went to sea in a bowl;
If the bowl had been stronger
My song had been longer.

The lines are based on the tale called «The Mad Men of Gotham,» the first known copy of which dates back to 1630 and is now preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

An old book of «Nursery Rhymes and

Ballads for Children» has a full-page illustration of these three worthies. They are represented as seated on the edge of a large bowl sailing on a boisterous sea. Two of them are engaged in learning the alphabet from large books, while the third is studying the heavens through a telescope on the end of which a bird is perched with its tail hanging over the object glass, completely covering it.

According to an old tradition, King John of England once planned to pass through Gotham on his way to Nottingham. The people of the village, knowing that the ground over which he would travel would be set apart to be used as a public highway, involving heavy taxes and burdens, opposed the plan, which made him very angry. He therefore sent a messenger to inquire the reason for their opposition, which he declared was a mark of disrespect.

Hearing of the king's displeasure, the Gothamites met in council and agreed to act like idiots when the messenger should come. So on his arrival he found the town folk all engaged in trivial pursuits, as trying to drown an eel or fence in a cuckoo, whereupon he returned to his master with the report that Gotham was not a suitable place to visit, as the people were all fools. On this the king gave up his project of passing through and left the people to follow their own devices.

While the word «Gotham» is said to mean «a dwelling of goats,» as a result of this tale Englishmen have for several centuries pointed to the town as «a dwelling of noodles.»

It is impossible to conceive of the popularity that attended the Gotham stories in olden times. Every one was familiar with them; they were printed in chapbooks, hawked about the streets by itinerant traders, recited with laughter at firesides and repeated in the congregating places of people, yet the inhabitants of the little town of Gotham were in no respect inferior to others. The reported reply of a Gotham lad to a stranger who was approaching the village shows that one boy at least was not deficient in native wit. As the stranger drew near the settlement he saw a lad working in a field and called out to him, asking whether Gotham were not the town that fools came from. «Oh, no,» replied the boy, «it is the town that fools come to!»

William C. Hazlett in his «Studies in Jocular Literature» states that the absurd tales told about the Gothamites predate the reign of King John, and that while they may be prodigiously silly, he would be sorry had they not been preserved.

Washington Irving, in «Salmagundi,» applied the name «Gotham» satirically to New York City, in allusion to the wisdom of its citizens; and the name so thoroughly fastened itself on the place that it has been adopted by many of the city's public institutions.

THE KING OF FRANCE

GENERATIONS of little folks have set their seal of approval upon this oft-quoted quatrain, which tells of the exploit of some unknown French king and is in the nature of a parody on the «Jack and Jill» rhyme. There seems to be no way of identifying the battle to which it alludes.

THE King of France went up the hill
With twenty thousand men,
The King of France came down the hill
And ne'er went up again.

Here is a second wording. Mr. Halliwell-Phillips says that when it is used in the nursery the nurse sings the firſt two lines over and over again until the expectant little one asks, «What next?» Then she sings the laſt two lines.

THE King of France, the King of France,
With forty thousand men,
Oh, they all went up the hill,
And so came back again.

The version of 1489 reads:

THE King of France and four thousand men
They drew their swords and put them up
again.

The boys of Warwickshire delight in quoting the song after this manner:

THE King of France,
Oh, the mighty
Duke of York,
With twenty thousand men,
He marched them up a very high hill
And he marched them down again;
And when they were up, they were up,
up, up,
And when they were down they were
down,
And when they were half-way up, I say,
They were neither up nor down.

PUSSY-CAT, PUSSY-CAT, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

THERE is an old saying that «A cat may look at a king» (or sometimes) «at a queen.» In Cornwall the condition is added, «if he carries his eyes about with him.» It is not improbable that this old saw may have given rise to the well-known lines:

PUSSY-CAT, Pussy-Cat, where have you been?
I've been to London to look at the Queen.
Pussy-Cat, Pussy-Cat, what did you there?
I frightened a little mouse under the chair.

Both the saying and the rhyme are supposed to refer to Queen Elizabeth (A. D. 1533-1603), who is said to have been greatly frightened at one time on finding a mouse in the folds of her dress.

The cat figures conspicuously in ancient doggerel rhymes. The firſt lines of several are here given, and the number could be greatly increased:

A cat came fiddling out of a barn.
Ding, dong, bell, Pussy's in the well!

Great A, little a.
I love little Pussy, her coat is so warm.
Jack Sprat had a cat.
Kitty, the spinner.
Pussy-Cat, Pussy-Cat, wilt thou be mine?
Pussy-Cat, wussicat, with a white foot.
Ride, Baby, ride.
Some little mice sat in a barn to spin.
The cat sat asleep by the side of the fire.
There was a crooked man and he walked
a crooked mile.
The rose is red, the grass is green.
Three cats sat by the fireside.
Three little mice sat down to spin.

LUCY LOCKET LOST HER POCKET

THIS rhyme is believed to refer to Lucy Locket and Kitty Fisher, courtesans of Charles II. (1630-1685), and to indicate how the latter supplanted the former in his fickle esteem. Two forms are here given:

LUCY LOCKET lost her pocket,
Kitty Fisher found it;

But the devil a penny was there in it
Except the binding round it.

LUCY LOCKET loſt her pocket,
Kitty Fisher found it;
Nothing in it, nothing in it,
But the binding round it.

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Mythological
and
Ancient Religious Rhymes

MYTHOLOGICAL AND ANCIENT RELIGIOUS RHYMES

JACK AND JILL

PROBABLY the oldest nursery doggerel in existence is the quatrain of «Jack and Jill.» If this rhyme in its present form does not date back to prehistoric times, the thought it conveys, the story it tells and practically the manner of its expression certainly do.

JACK and Jill went up the hill
To get a pail of water;
Jack fell down and broke his crown

And Jill came tumbling after.

The rhyme, at first sight nonsense, on examination has a deeper meaning.

According to Scandinavian mythology, two children named Hjuki and Bil, corresponding to «Jack and Jill,» were drawing water with a bucket called Soeg from a well called Byrgir and carrying the filled vessel away suspended on a pole called Simul, which rested on their shoulders, when Mani the moon suddenly came down from the sky, seized the children and fled with them up to heaven, where they can always be seen in the spots on the moon. With the aid of a little imagination the dark spots visible on the face of the lunar disk do resemble a boy and a girl bearing a pail of water.

H. A. Guerber, in «Myths of Northern Lands,» mentions that «Mani was accompanied by Hjuki the waxing and Bil the waning moon, two children, the original 'Jack and Jill,' whom he had snatched from earth, where a cruel father forced them to carry water all night.»

The Rev. S. Baring-Gould, who has made a careful study of the quatrain, says:

"I have no hesitation in saying that this verse has a high antiquity and refers to the Eddaic Hjuki and Bil. The names indicate as much. Hjuki and Bil in Norse would be pronounced Juki, which would readily become Jack, and Gil, which for the sake of euphony and in order to give a female name to one of the children, would become Jill. The fall of Jack and the subsequent fall of Jill simply represent the vanishing of one moonspot after another as the moon wanes.

"But the old Norse myth had a deeper signification than merely an explanation of the moonspots. Hjuki is derived from the verb 'jukka,' to heap or pile together, to assemble or increase, and Bil from 'bila,' to break up or dissolve. Hjuki and Bil therefore signify nothing more than the waxing and waning of the moon, and the water they are represented as bearing signifies the fact that the rainfall depends on the phases of the moon."

It may therefore be assumed that this rhyme was originally connected with the phases of the moon, and that the story it tells is closely related to moon worship, one of the oldest forms of religion.

Whittier gracefully refers to the old Scandinavian myth in his «Child Life»:

HARKEN, child, unto a story,
For the moon is in the sky,
And across her shield of silver
See two tiny cloudlets fly.

Watch them closely, mark them sharply:
As across the light they pass
Seem they not to have the figures
Of a little lad and lass?

See, my child, across their shoulders
Lies a little pole, and lo!

Yonder speck is just the bucket
Swinging softly to and fro.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

Never is the bucket empty,
Never are the children old;
Ever when the moon is shining
We the children may behold.

A large number of child rhymes have sprung from the «Jack and Jill» lines, as have two well-known proverbs:

JACK is no judge of Jill's beauty.
EVERY Jack will find his Jill.

An eighteenth-century jingle runs:

I WON'T be my father's Jack,
I won't be my mother's Jill,
I will be the fiddler's wife
And have music when I will.
T'other little tune, t'other little tune,
Prythee, love, play me t'other little tune.

A variant reading of the rhyme used in connection with the sleight-of-hand game quoted on page 62 is interesting as a reminder that the subject matter of these chapters sometimes overlaps:

THERE were two blackbirds sat
under a hill;
The one was named Jack and the
other named Jill.
Fly away, Jack! Fly away, Jill!
Come back, Jack! Come back, Jill!

SING A SONG OF SIXPENCE

ORIGINALLY this old song had five stanzas, although the first four only are now commonly quoted.

SING a song of sixpence,
A bag- or pocket- full of rye;
Four and twenty blackbirds
Baked in a pie.

When the pie was opened
The birds began to sing.
Wasn't that a dainty dish
To set before a king?

The king was in his counting-house
Counting out his money;
The queen was in the parlor
Eating bread and honey.

The maid was in the garden
Hanging out the clothes;
There came a little blackbird
- or magpie -
And snipped off her nose.

Jenny was so mad
She didn't know what to do;
She put her finger in her ear
And cracked it right in two!

Beaumont and Fletcher, two great English dramatiﬆs, contemporaries of Shakespeare, in their time as popular as he, if not more so, allude to this song in the play «Bonduca,» where «Petillus» says:

WHOA, here's a ﬆir, now! Sing a
song of sixpence!

Shakespeare himself possibly referred to the song in «Twelfth Night,» where «Sir Toby» calls out to the clown:

> COME on; there is sixpence for you;
> Let's have a song!

An ancient chant which was used in Brittany and Languedoc describes a disabled thrush as singing:

> THE thrush has lost his beak.
> How will he manage to sing,
> the poor thrush?
> Yet he goes on singing-
> Yet he goes on singing.

The origin of the «Song of Sixpence» is unknown. It has been suggested that it may have sprung from an old receipt for keeping blackbirds alive in a pie, as a mere jest perhaps, so that they would fly away on the pie's being cut. This receipt is found in a book, «Empularis, or The Italian Banquet,» published in 1589. Of course it was a mere artifice, the birds being introduced after the pie was made.

While the device may have been a freak of fancy, it is possible that it was used to fortify some ancient belief.

Lina Eckenstein, writing on bird sacrifice, says that «The blackbird is held in reverence in Salop and Montgomeryshire, and blackbird pie was eaten in Cornwall on Twelfth Night, but there is no reference to the sacrificial slaying of the bird, as far as I am aware. In the French chant the bird continues to sing, although it is killed. The same idea finds expression in the nursery song of 'Sing a Song of Sixpence.' The piece, taken in conjunction with the eating of blackbird pie in Cornwall and the French chant, seems to preserve the remembrance of the ancient bird sacrifice.

In prehistoric times birds were supposed to embody the souls of departed friends. The dead still lived in the feathered creatures of the forest. They were venerated, and it was taught that through them men could hold fellowship with the unseen world. Greek and Roman mythology associated birds with gods, goddesses and demigods. It is no wonder therefore that many legends, myths and superstitions of the past are connected with them.

Considering the large share that the feathered creatures of meadows and forests had in making mythology and in satisfying the religious longings of men, it should not be thought strange were we sometime to discover that, while the nursery rhyme «Sing a Song of Sixpence» was born of fancy, its roots go back to some religious rites of the forgotten past.

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

THIS old jingle made its first appearance in English print in 1770, as an illustrated toy book published by John Marshall, the celebrated printer of children's books. His shop in Aldermary Churchyard was known as «The Great A and Bouncing B Toy Factory,» after the well-known couplet:

GREAT A, little a, bouncing B,
The cat's in the cupboard and she can't see
or - and can't find me.

The form used by Marshall began:

THIS is the HOUSE that Jack built.
This is the MALT that lay in the house that Jack built.
This is the RAT that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

and so on to the priest that married the man that kissed the maid that milked the cow that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat.

Other versions extend the story so as to include the farmer that sowed the corn that kept the cock that crowed in the morn that waked the priest.

Though the jingle was new to most of Marshall's readers, it was an adaptation, taken from an old Jewish chant published in Venice more than a hundred and fifty years before. The earliest known form was Chaldaic and is found in Sepher Haggadah. It constituted a part of an old Hebrew liturgy.

The ancient hymn is too long to quote in full, but a portion may profitably be given with an interpretation made in 1731 by P. N. Leberecht of Leipsic:

A KID, a kid, my father bought
For two pieces of money.
A kid, a kid.

Then came the CAT and ate the kid
That my father bought
For two pieces of money.
A kid, a kid.

Then came the DOG and bit the cat
That ate the kid
That my father bought
For two pieces of money.
A kid, a kid.

So the poem grew by prefixing a line to each succeeding stanza until finally:

Then came THE HOLY ONE, blessed
be He!
And killed the Angel of Death
That killed the butcher
That slew the ox
That drank the water
That quenched the fire
That burned the staff
That beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid
That my father bought
For two pieces of money.
A kid, a kid.

The historical and prophetical interpretation of this is as follows:

The kid, according to Hebrew law, was a pure animal and denoted the Jewish race; the Father by whom it was purchased was Jehovah; the two pieces of money referred to Moses and Aaron who led the nation out of Egypt; the cat stood for the Assyrians who took the ten tribes into captivity; the dog signified the Babylonians; the staff, the Persians; the fire, the Grecian Empire under Alexander the Great; the water, the Romans, by whom the nation was subjugated; the ox stood for the Saracens, who brought Palestine under the dominion of the Caliph; the butcher who slew the ox was the Crusader's daughter; and the Angel of Death represented the Turkish power that wrested the Holy Land from the Franks. The last stanza was intended to be prophetic of the days when the Turks would be driven out of Palestine and Israel would again become a fixed nation living in its own land under the dominion of its long-expected Messiah.

Then came THE HOLY ONE, blessed be He!

This chant, from which came «The House That Jack Built,» was never intended to be a nursery rhyme, but was originally prepared as a help to worship and to show that Jehovah would eventually take vengeance on the Turkish Empire in behalf of His own people.

A parody on «The House That Jack Built,» entitled «The Political House That Jack Built,» was written and published in England in 1819, and was so popular that it went through fifty-four editions. Its popularity was undoubtedly due in a large degree to the fact that it was illustrated by George Cruikshank.

THE OLD WOMAN AND THE CROOKED SIXPENCE

CLOSELY resembling «The House That Jack Built,» this tale has been repeated in the nurseries of England and America for two hundred years, and is found in various forms over a wide geographic area. In some versions the old woman is said to have found a kid, in others a silver penny, in others two pennies and in others a pig; but in the English form it is always a crooked sixpence with which a pig was purchased that would not jump over a stile. Assuming that the pig was under a spell, the old woman called a dog to her assistance. In olden times a belief in spells and omens was common, and she naturally attributed the pig's stubbornness to witchery. The dog failing to break the spell, she next called a stick, then fire, water, an ox, a cat and a cow. Finally the cow gave milk to the cat, then by a series of provisions the old woman succeeded in getting her pig over the stile and reached home.

This and other cumulative pieces all came from the Hebrew chant quoted on pages 143 and 144. The original source was probably in some heathen ritual intended to show that every event is preceded by a succession of causes, that no adverse circumstance is without a reason and that to understand any event it is necessary to go back step by step to the starting-point.

HOT CROSS BUNS

IN old England, Good Friday morning was ushered in by a demand for hot cross buns. No breakfast was complete without them. The buns of olden times were different from those now sold in the bake shops. They were more highly spiced, smaller, crisper, covered with a brown sugary crust and marked, as they are now, with a cross on top. In days of old, hot cross buns were not considered properly made unless all the work was done on Good Friday, so that the housewife was forced to rise betimes to mix the dough and bake the buns, to be ready for the morning meal.

Before the family took their seats at the breakfast table, they heard the cries of the street venders outside calling for purchasers, and with monotonous singsong voices loudly reciting a formula which has become a nursery jingle:

HOT cross buns, hot cross buns;
One-a-penny, two-a-penny,
Hot cross buns!

or perhaps extending the cry:

If your daughters don't like them,
Give them to your sons.
One-a-penny, two-a-penny, hot cross buns!

or varying the wording:

WHEN Good Friday comes
The old woman runs
With hot cross buns.
One-a-penny buns,
Two-a-penny buns,
All hot buns!

In the days of our forefathers, the aged and the young distributed buns to others who needed them; so that many people went about the streets between the hours of church, giving them away.

There was an old superstition that hot

cross buns, if properly made, would never mold, but though they might become hard, they would retain their freshness for years; and that bread made on Good Friday and dried could be crumbled in water and used as an efficient remedy for all physical ailments. It may be that Good Friday buns and bread kept without molding, not so much because of their sacredness as because of their heavy spicing.

The old-time practice of marking the loaves with the sign of the cross was not confined to Good Friday's bakings,- it was common for housewives so to mark their bread and buns.

It may not be generally known that the practice of eating hot cross buns on Good Friday was borrowed by our forebears from the Saxons, who ate cakes marked with a cross to honor Eostre, the goddess of the east, whose feast was observed in the springtime.

Crossed buns were the sacred cakes of the pagan world, offered by devotees to their gods and goddesses. They were adopted by early Christians, who probably thought it wiser to keep than combat a practice inevitably prevalent among those whom they would convert. They therefore continued to use the cakes, changing the significance of the sacred sign on the crust and making it apply to the cross of Christ. Two buns marked with crosses have been found in the excavations at Herculaneum, showing that they were known and used by the Romans.

Jeremiah's denunciations of idolatry (vii. 18; xliv. 19) are interesting here:

> THE children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.
>
> WHEN we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink-offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink-offerings unto her?

These sacred cakes made to honor a pagan goddess are believed to have been marked as crossed buns are today. To the pagan the cross represented the four quarters of the moon, queen of heaven; to us it represents the sacrifice of Christ.

Some scholars tell us that the sacred cakes of the ancients were sometimes crudely stamped with the image of the goddess instead of the cross, which is probably true.

Moon-cakes are made at the present

time in China, where they are presented during the feast of Yue-Ping to the queen of heaven, who represents to the people the female principle of their theology.

In Egypt the moon-cakes are horned and made to resemble the sacred heifer. Mr. Robert Chambers tells us that they are called «bous» [Greek for «ox»], in one of its oblique cases «boun,» which may have been corrupted to «bun.»

Little do we in Christian England and America realize that when we enjoy hot cross buns at breakfast on Good Friday we are indebted to the far-distant past for these little loaves, and that other generations have for three thousand years and more made similar buns and crossed the crust to symbolize their faith.

Charm Rhymes

CHARM RHYMES

LADYBIRD, LADYBIRD, FLY AWAY HOME

IT is a child's delight in summer to catch the common field and garden insect known as the ladybird and, placing it on his open palm, watch for its flight. When his patience is exhausted, he seeks to hasten its departure by blowing on its bright spotted back and uttering the charm:

LADYBIRD, ladybird,
   Fly away home;
Your house is on fire,
   Your children will burn.

The blowing, with the warmth and

moisture of his hand, more potent than the charm, soon causes the little creature to take its flight, but it is hard to convince the child that the charm did not cause it to spread its wings and depart.

The rhyme repeated by children is known in many lands, with various substitutes for the name ladybird. In English the little beetle has other titles, as ladybug, ladyclock, ladycow and ladyfly. It is also called «Sir Ellison» or «Lady Ellison» or «Lady Landers» or the «Virgin Mary's maid.» In Denmark it is ladyhen and in Sweden it is «Lady Mary's keybearer.» This last substitution for the ladybird shows a connection with an old folk-tale. The whole rhyme is changed according to the locality where it is repeated. Here are a few renderings:

LADYCOW, ladycow, fly away home;
Thy house is on fire, thy children all roam,-
All but one that lies under a stone.
Fly away, ladycow, ere it is gone.

LADY, Lady Landers,
Fly away to Flanders.

THIS ladyfly I take from the grass,
Whose spotted back might scarlet red surpass.
Fly, ladybird, north, south, east or west;
Fly where the man is that I love best.

The most popular name given to this beetle in lands under Christian influence is ladybird, which was regarded in olden times as «The bird of Our Lady.»

The rhyme made its first appearance in England during the reign of George II., being printed in a nursery book in the version now generally used by us.

Many more forms might be quoted:

LADYCOW, ladycow, fly from my hand!
Tell me where my true love stands,
Up hill and down hill and by the sea-sand.

GONDENBUG, gondenbug,
Fly away home!
Whr house is bahnt dun,
And your children all gone.

BLESS you, bless you, bonnie bee!
Say, when will your wedding be?
If it be tomorrow day
Take your wings and fly away.

As some of the old English songs, including the «Ladybird» verse, are found in Swedish, Danish and German forms, and as these people were of like ancestry with the English, it may be readily believed that Saxon mothers sang the rhyme to their babies in the far past and that it was brought by them into England. The following old Saxon lines will be seen to resemble closely the «Ladybird» quatrain:

> HEAVEN'S little chicken, fly away!
> Thy house is on fire;
> Thy children are all crying.

«Plenty of ladybirds, plenty of blight,» is an old saw used among the English peasantry, who noticed that the east wind brought both ladybirds and blight across the German Ocean. Paradoxical as it may seem, they also believed that ladybirds were harbingers of good luck, as a large crop followed their appearance. They were probably not aware that the harvest was abundant, not so much because of any spell that the little spotted beetles cast over nature, as because they consumed the aphides.

Netherlanders also regard the ladybird as a bringer of good luck for very much the same reason, as the insect feeds on plant lice and other small garden pests, thus securing a better condition of vegetable life.

Michael Drayton (1563-1631) refers to the little creature in these lines:

> THEY shall be of the ladycow,
> The dainty shell upon her back
> Of crimson strewed with spots of black.

John Gay (1685-1732) also speaks of it in this couplet:

> HE leaves my hand; see, to the west he's flown
> To call my true love from the faithless Toren.

The «Ladybird» rhyme is supposed to have been originally a charm to speed the sun in its setting and to make certain that its departure below the horizon would be harmless, as it was in danger from the red glow of the western sky; also to insure its return in the morning uninjured by the deep sea of fire through which it must pass.

«The ladybird,» says Lina Eckenstein, «is the representative among ourselves of a large class of insects which were associated with the movement of the sun from the earliest times. The association goes back to the 'kheper' or chafer of ancient Egypt, which has the habit of rolling along the ball that contains its eggs. This ball was identified as the orb of the sun, and the 'kheper' was esteemed as the beneficent power that helped to keep it moving.»

Worshipers in the East still pray for the safe return of the departing sun.

The following paraphrase will show perhaps what the original import of the present nursery rhyme was:

FLY, Lady Sun, homeward
  Beneath the bright sky!
Your palace is burning
  And quick you must fly!
Its flames are fast mounting;
  All red is its glow;
Your children will perish:
  So hasten below!

RAIN, RAIN, GO AWAY!

LITTLE children enjoy the conceit that they can charm away rain by saying:

RAIN, rain, go away!
Come back another day.

The formula is of great antiquity. A seventeenth-century variant runs:

RAIN, rain, go to Spain!
Fair weather come again.

Here are a few other specimens of the numerous charms to drive away rain:

> RAIN, rain, go to Spain,
> Never come back again;
> When I brew and when I bake
> I'll give you a figgy -or plum- cake.

A «plum cake» and a «figgy cake» are the same thing. In dialect English raisins are called both «figs» and «plums.»

> RAIN, rain, go to Spain,
> Never show your face again.
> RAIN, rain, pour down,
> But not a drop in our town.

It is customary in Durham for children to put two straws together in the shape of a cross and then, as though the symbol had power to drive away rain, they say:

> RAIN, rain, go away,
> Din'nt come back till Christmas day.

Moſt of the rain charms date back earlier than the seventeenth century.

RAIN, rain, go away,
Come another -summer's- day;
or- Come again April day;
Little Johnny wants to play.

❧

Riddle and Catch Rhymes

RIDDLE AND CATCH RHYMES

AS proverbs are said to be condensed parables, so riddles may be viewed as condensed fables thrown into an interrogative form.

«Riddling,» says Newberry, in the preface of his riddle book published in 1778, «if I am not mistaken, is the art of both dissembling and undissembling.**** Its utility is unbounded and may be extended with propriety and benefit to every part of life and every branch of learning. It is a kind of natural logic which

I should be glad to see adopted by our universities in the place of that jargon they at present make use of.»

If Newberry was extravagant in his praise of riddles, it must not be forgotten that the riddle is the oldest and most natural form of humor in existence.

WHILE we have an account of Samson's proposing one, riddles, as far as may be ascertained, came into general favor six centuries before Christ or about the time of the seven wise men of Greece, one of whom is said to have been an adept in forming them. Later, knowledge covering them became part of the intellectual equipment of the Greeks.

Riddles were given at Roman banquets in the form of conundrums. According to Plutarch, the blind poet Homer died of chagrin because he was unable to answer one, but so little is known of Homer apart from his writings that Plutarch's statement cannot be verified.

BEFORE the Reformation forming and propounding riddles was considered an important part of a person's education and was therefore cultivated. No occupation was more welcome to our ancestors during the long winter evenings before the age of printing, when topics of conversation were very limited. Sitting about their great log fires they would repeat myths and fables and ask riddles as they awaited the wandering story teller, whose advent was hailed rapturously, as a new and delightful experience.

The old jesters or fools attached to the great houses had a store of them in mind ready to use when occasion might afford a good chance.

When the thoughts of men turned toward religious subjects and the Reformation called forth discussion of Christian doctrine at every fireside and in every place of converse, riddles fell into disfavor.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they again became popular and then gradually went out of use, so that at the present time they are seldom heard. Conundrums, which are sometimes short prose riddles, although more often mere puns put in the form of questions, have taken their place, but conundrums are fast disappearing except among children.

PERHAPS the well-known question by the Sphinx is the most celebrated riddle of all time. It refers to Man, who creeps in babyhood and walks with a stick in old age:

> WHAT goes on four feet, on two
> feet and three,
> But the more feet it goes on the
> weaker it be?

The riddle of the Egg has the distinction of being called the most beautiful ever composed:

> IN marble walls as white as milk,
> Lined with a curtain soft as silk,
> Within a fountain crystal clear
> A golden apple doth appear.
> No doors are there to this strong hold
> Yet thieves break in and steal the gold.

In olden times it was a common thing to have in possession a large stone bottle holding three gallons or more and having a handle that ended in a venerable Druid face. This was called «Graybeard.»

OLD Father Graybeard,
  Without tooth or tongue,
If you give me your finger
  I'll give you my thumb.

The familiar riddle of the Candle runs:

LITTLE Nancy Etticote
In a white petticoat,
With a red nose;
The longer she stands
The shorter she grows.

A curious old dialogue presupposes a man and a woman quarreling. He says:

THREE words I know to be true,
All which begin with W.

She answers:

I TOO know them,
And eke three which begin with M.

The words referred to are «Woman Wants Wit» and «Man Much More.»

Another old catch rhyme is:

ELIZABETH, Elspeth, Betsy and Bess,
They all went together to seek a bird's nest;
They found a bird's nest with five eggs in,
They all took one and left four in.

Four forms of the name of one girl.

Here are two catch rhymes that closely resemble each other. The first tells about a Man on a Stool, with a Leg of Mutton which a Dog steals:

TWO legs sat upon three legs,
With one leg in his lap;
In comes four legs
And runs away with one leg;
Up jumps two legs,
Catches up three legs,
Throws it after four legs,
And makes him bring one leg back.

A Milkmaid is the heroine of the other:

TWO legs sat upon three legs,
With four legs standing by;

Four then are drawn by ten.
Read my riddle ye can't,
However much ye try.

A seventeenth-century riddle about the Rainbow refers to Oliver Cromwell:

PURPLE, yellow, red and green,
The king cannot reach it nor the queen;
Nor can Old Noll, whose power's so great,
Tell me this riddle while I count eight.

The following clever catch rhyme becomes true with change of punctuation:

EVERY lady in this land
Has twenty nails upon each hand,
Five and twenty hands and feet.
All this is true without deceit.

Here is a riddle that has always been popular with children:

AS I was going to St. Ives,
I met a man with seven wives.
Every wife had seven sacks,
Every sack had seven cats,

Every cat had seven kits.
Kits, cats, sacks and wives,
How many were going to St. Ives?

One. The kits, cats, sacks and wives were going in the opposite direction.

A Pair of Tongs is described:

LONG legs, crooked thighs,
Little head and no eyes.

HUMPTY-DUMPTY

HUMPTY-DUMPTY is the hero of poetry and song the world over. In English his riddle rhyme reads:

HUMPTY-DUMPTY sat on a wall,
Humpty-Dumpty had a great fall;
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't set Humpty-Dumpty up again.
or- Couldn't put Humpty-Dumpty
together again.
or- Three score men and three score more
Couldn't place Humpty-Dumpty as he
was before.

While children have sometimes been puzzled in seeking an answer to the riddle, its meaning is clearly indicated by the name «Humpty-Dumpty,» as the words mean «humped round» and «short and thick,» thus describing an egg.

It is not surprising that it should have been known for centuries in almost every country of the world; for from all antiquity the egg has been an enigma representing the origin of life.

Lina Eckenstein reminds us that «According to 'Kalevala,' the Finnish epic, the world egg fell and broke. Its upper part became the vault of heaven and its lower part the earth. The yolk formed the sun, the white the moon, and the fragments of the shell became the stars in heaven.»

Tradition says that Aristophanes, who lived four centuries before Christ, knew the great bird that laid the world egg.

The riddle has many renderings, only a few of which can be given. The three which follow are from France, Denmark and Sweden respectively:

BOULE-BOULE on the bench;
Boule-Boule on the ground.
There is no man in England
Who can restore him.

LILLE-TRILLE lay on a shelf;
Lille-Trille thence pitched herself.
Not all the men in our land, I ken,
Can put Lille-Trille together again.

THRILLE-TILLE on the roof-tree sat;
Thrille-Tille down fell flat.
Never a leech the world can show
That Thrille-Tille can heal, I trow.

A quaint old Saxon version says:

HUMPELKEN-PUMPELKEN sat on a bench,
Humpelken-Pumpelken fell from the bench.
There is no doctor in Engelland
Who can restore Humpelken-Pumpelken.

Another old wording places the egg, not on a wall, shelf or bench, but on a «beck» (brook), and is interesting because of its oddity:

HUMPTY-DUMPTY lay on a beck
With all his sinews about his neck.
Forty doctors and forty wights
Couldn't put Humpty-Dumpty to rights.

The old riddle of the Nettle, «Hitty-Pitty,» seems to have taken «Humpty-Dumpty» as a model:

HITTY-PITTY within the wall,
Hitty-Pitty without the wall.

If you touch Hitty-Pitty
Hitty-Pitty will bite you.

In the sixteenth century the name «Humpty-Dumpty» was given to a drink made of ale boiled in brandy. A girls' game, still played, which calls for movements resembling a rolling egg, goes by the same name.

There is no riddle more interesting unless it be that of the Sphinx, yet many hold their popularity and are occasionally heard in gatherings of young people. Old riddles should be retained, particularly if they belong to the folk-lore of a nation. Max Mueller has well said, «In whatever language it may be written, every line, every word, is welcome that bears the impress of the early days of mankind.»

Rhyming Formulas

RHYMING FORMULAS

ST. SWITHEN'S DAY

ST. SWITHEN, the bishop of Winchester who died in 862, desired to be buried, according to legend, in the churchyard of the minster, that the «sweet rain of heaven» might fall upon his grave. On canonization the monks thought to honor the saint by removing his body into the choir, and set July 15th for the ceremony; but it rained day after day for forty days. So the monks saw the saint was averse to their project and wisely abandoned it.

Hence the rhyme repeated on July 15th:

ST. SWITHEN'S day gif thow doſt rain
For forty days it will remain;
St. Swithen's day gif thow be fair
For forty days 't will rain na mair.

The legend goes back nearly four hundred years; but the doggerel lines were known in the twelfth century, and tenth century writers all agree that the saint's bones were removed by his desire as imparted in a vision.

Although St. Swithen has the support of this legend, given above in Mr. Brewer's words, to account for his influence over weather conditions, he was not the only saint who was supposed to have this power. In France St. Médard, whose feaſt comes on June 8, and Sts. Gervais and Protais (June 19) are accredited with it. Similar sayings are current on June 15th:

IF St. Vitus' day be rainy weather
It will rain for thirty days together.

on St. John the Baptist's day, June 24:

RAIN on St. John's day
And we may expect a wet harvest.

on August 10th:

IF on St. Lawrence the weather is fine,
Hope for fair autumn and good wine.

on St Martin's day, November 11th:

BULLION'S DAY gif ye be fair
For forty days 'twill rain na mair.

and on the feast of St. Catherine of Alexandria, November 25th:

AS at Catherine, foul or fair,
So will be the next February.

THIRTY DAYS HATH SEPTEMBER

THIS sixteenth-century rhyme is often held in memory by adults to recall the number of days in any given month. The first form is the more common:

THIRTY days hath September,
April, June and November;
All the rest have thirty-one,
Except February alone,
Which hath four and twenty-four,
And every fourth year one day more.

or - February hath twenty-eight alone,
Except in leap-year, that's the time
When February's days are twenty-nine.

BUT thirty days November hath,
April, June and September;
February hath but twenty-eight,
Without a leap-year attender.

MULTIPLICATION IS VEXATION

NO better formula could be devised to express the bitter feelings of a multitude of schoolchildren than the following complaint, which is known to have been used at least as far back as the sixteenth century:

MULTIPLICATION is vexation,
Division is as bad;
The Rule of Three doth puzzle me,
And Fractions drive me mad.
or - The Rule of Three perplexes me,
And Practice drives me mad.

SPECKS ON THE FINGERS

IT is quite common for children to count the white spots on their nails and interpret their meaning thus:

SPECKS on the fingers,
Fortune lingers;
Specks on the thumbs,
Fortune surely comes.

A GIFT on the thumb
Is sure to come;
A gift on the finger
Is sure to linger.

A quite different significance is given to the spots by assuming that varied fortune attends any one on whose nails they are found, when a formula is recited as in a counting-out rhyme, beginning with the thumb and using these words:

GIFTS - friends - foe -
Sweetheart - journey to go.

Children often regard the white specks as standing for lies which have been told.

SEE A PIN AND PICK IT UP

FOR generations children have listened to the rhyme quoted in its two forms below, as it was repeated for their admonition, and often it has been learned so thoroughly that the practice of picking up stray pins has become a lifelong habit.

SEE a pin and pick it up,
All the day you'll have good luck.
See a pin and let it lie,
All the day you'll have to cry.

SEE a pin and let it lie,

Sure to want before you die.
See a pin and let it lay,
Will have ill luck all the day.

The excellent habit of picking up stray pins seems to have been derived from an old superstition that pins used in a bridal costume were particularly lucky. In olden times brides were accustomed, on removing their wedding garments, to throw the pins away, so that others might pick them up and so secure fortune's favor.

Randolph says that Mary Queen of Scots, when she changed her clothes after her marriage to Lord Darnley, permitted those who stood near and could approach to take a pin.

CROSSPATCH, DRAW THE LATCH

"CROSSPATCH" is a term of reproach that in former years was frequently hurled at ill-tempered persons. Children of today still quote the famous lines:

> CROSSPATCH, draw the latch,
> Sit by the fire and spin;
> Take a cup and drink it up
> And call your neighbors in.

This metrical weapon dates back at least to the sixteenth century, as it is found in «Gammer Gurton's Needle,» the earliest comedy, with one exception, in the English language.

A «patch» is a paltry fellow, a gossip, a ninny or a fool. The term was often applied in olden times to a professional fool because of the party-colored or patched clothing which he wore.

In such a sense Shakespeare uses it of «Trinculo,» in allusion to his dress as a licensed jester:

Caliban. WHAT a pied ninny's this? Thou scurvy patch! *Tempeſt iii. 2.*

He uses it too of «Launcelot Gobbo»:

Shylock. THE patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder. *Merchant of Venice ii. 5.*

and as a verbal missile in the following interchange of courtesies:

Dromio of Syracuse. MOME, malt-horse, capon, cockscomb, idiot, patch!

Either get thee from the door, or sit down at the hatch.

Dromio of Ephesus. What patch is made our porter? *Comedy of Errors iii. 1.*

Jingles

JINGLES

JINGLES are bits of poetry or rhyme that jingle, or have a musical and catching sound, generally with little sense.

HEY, DIDDLE, DIDDLE

THE following may be considered the most absurd of nursery jingles, yet it is perhaps the most popular of them all:

HEY, diddle, diddle,
The cat and the fiddle!
The cow jumped over the moon.
The little dog laughed
To see such craft,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

It has been suggested that it was the

outgrowth of a sixteenth-century dance mentioned in the play of «King Cambyses.» The intent of the word «diddle» is uncertain. It may be from Anglo-Saxon, meaning «deceive, cheat or overreach,» or have sprung, as «Murray's Dictionary» suggests, from a word indicating the production of music without speech, as for instance the humming of a tune. Mr. Hallowell-Phillips seems to hold somewhat to the latter view; for he says that the meaningless first line is a corruption of a very intelligible Greek phrase translated, «Sing words not clear and sing words clear.»

GOOSEY, GOOSEY, GANDER

ANOTHER bit of doggerel, frequently repeated in the nursery and treasured as long as childhood lasts, runs:

GOOSEY, goosey, gander,
  Whither shall I wander?
Up-stairs, down-stairs, -
  In my lady's chamber.

There I met an old man
  Who wouldn't say his prayers:
I took him by the left leg
  And threw him down the stairs.

The first line has been considered so valuable and so well suited to vigorous play that girls have adopted it in a game wherein one child treats her companion almost as roughly as was the old man who would not say his prayers. As adapted the lines after the first are quite new:

GOOSEY, goosey, gander,
Who stands yonder?

In reſponse to this queſtion a blindfolded girl in the center of a ring points to a companion, guessing her name.

Little Bessie Baker:-
Pick her up and shake her.

The blindfolded girl then shakes her.

Give her a bit of bread and cheese
And throw her over the water.

The blindfolded girl swings around the girl she has named and shaken, who in turn is blindfolded and takes the center of the ring.

DICKERY, DICKERY, DOCK

ELEVEN lines belong to the «dickery» rhyme, though only five are usually quoted. The complete jingle is:

DICKERY, dickery, dock!
The mouse ran up the clock;
The clock struck one,
The mouse ran down.
or - And down the mouse ran.
Dickery, *etc.*
The clock struck three,
The mouse ran down.

Dickery, *etc.*
The clock ſtruck ten,
The mouse came again.
Dickery, *etc.*

Another «dickery» rhyme reads:

DICKERY, dickery, dare!
The pig flew up in the air,
The man in the brown soon
brought him down,
Dickery, dickery, dare!

HARK! HARK! THE DOGS DO BARK

IN olden times begging was not confined to the indigent: many able-bodied men and women ranging in age from sixteen to forty years engaged in the business. It was an easy way to gain a living and sometimes became so lucrative that beggars accumulated large fortunes. The majority of those who went about soliciting alms were under twenty-seven years of age. Alexander Barclay, in his «Ship of Fools,» published in 1508, describes the dress of the professional beggar:

IF the beggar hane his ſtaf and his hodde,
One bagge behynde and another before,
Then thynkes he hym in the myddes of his goods.
Thoughe that his clothes be raggyd and tore,
His body mere bare, he hath no thought therfore;
And if some man cloth them well today,
To morrow it shall agayne be solde away.

Yet we muſt not assume that, because moſt beggars wore ragged clothes, all were ill clad; for in some places they were obliged by law not only to wear a badge on the back or cheſt, or on the sleeve, but were also required to wear a livery. The badge was usually the Roman letter «P,» which was underſtood to ſtand for the word «Pauper.»

During the reign of William III. (from

1689 to 1702), not only beggars themselves wore badges, but their wives and children, who lived with them, were also obliged to submit to the ignominy and wear the letter «P» with the first letter of the parish to which they belonged cut from red and blue cloth.

Sir Walter Scott has described a beggar who was dressed in a long blue gown of worsted or frieze cloth, with a belt about his waist. The badge that he wore on his breast was some five inches in diameter, of white metal, and bore an embossed inscription.

Street beggars were often accompanied by ballad singers to attract attention and gather a crowd.

John Stow, the English antiquarian, who in 1598 published his «Survey of

London,» which is a standard authority on old London, was by no means lazy and never willingly a pauper, yet obtained under James I. a license to beg.

When begging had established itself as a legalized profession, the gypsies joined the fraternity and swarmed over England soliciting alms, telling fortunes, tinkering and trading, so that the times were correctly represented by the nursery rhyme:

HARK! hark!
The dogs do bark,
The beggars are coming to town;
Some in jags,
Some in rags,
And some in velvet gown.

It is not surprising that the dogs should bark on the approach of a company of beggars; for when they went from one town or parish to another they were variously dressed, some in rags, some with ornamental jags on the edges of their garments, some in velvet gowns and wearing badges, and all making a great racket with their clack or clap dishes.

The clack or clap dish which beggars carried was made of wood, with a movable lid, which the bearer kept clapping on the dish to attract attention and bring the hearers to their street doors.

Of course legalizing and labeling paupers, beggars and vagrants greatly added to their number and led to abuses, soon followed by stringent regulations and punishments.

MISTRESS MARY, QUITE CONTRARY

YOUNG girls often use the following rhyme to taunt companions who are unwilling to take their fair share of difficulties in play:

MISTRESS Mary, quite contrary,
  How does your garden grow?
With cockle shells and silver bells
  And mussels all in a row.

The cockle and mussel shells referred to were probably used as a fancy border for Mistress Mary's garden. Some renderings substitute «cowslips,» «columbine» or «cuckolds» for «mussels.» The last is probably used in the oldest forms of the rhyme. Other variant forms are shown in the following version and substitutes:

MARY, Mary, quite contrary,
  How does your garden grow?

With cockle shells and silver bells
Or- silver bells and cockle shells
And pretty maids all in a row.
Or- four maids.
Or- little maids.

Mr. Halliwell-Phillips surmises that this doggerel may have reference originally to the old Scottish song:

WHEN cockle shells turn silver bells
And mussels grow in every tree;
When frost and snow shall warm us,
Then shall my love prove true to thee.

⁂

Lullabies

LULLABIES

LULLABIES are about as old as babies. One cannot imagine a time when mothers did not bend over their little ones and lull them to sleep with a crooning song. Some lullabies that are considered modern have been sung for centuries. Many of the older ones started as beautiful folk-verses written by forgotten poets and later adopted by peasants. Like proverbs, they came into common use by the gradual process of years. Most of the great lullabies came into favor before the United States was a nation, and none in general use today originated in America.

Babies show from an early age a great appreciation of rhythm, and take pleasure in noises which are not loud or startling. They delight in low measured sounds.

The ancient Latin and English lullabies were probably first sung as carols. It was not until about A. D. 1400 that carols attached to Christmas appeared. Before that period they were mere dance songs associated for the most part with love and springtime. After the opening of the fifteenth century poets gave rein to their imagination and, breaking away from a strict conformity with Biblical narrative, sang of the Virgin Mother as their fancy led. The carols were then often sung at the representation of the Holy Child in the manger,- a custom still kept.

Some believe that the word «lullaby» is derived from an old Talmudic legend to the effect that after Adam was created the animals came to him in pairs to be named and that this made him lonely because he had no mate. God therefore gave him a wife named Lilith, created from the dust. Realizing that she was of the same material as her husband, Lilith asserted her equality with him. This Adam denied, whereupon she left him, vanishing into air to avoid being forced to return.

God then sent three angels in search of her. After a time they found her in the Red Sea, but could not persuade her to return, although they threatened that, if she did not, she should lose a hundred of her demon children by death each day.

So God made Adam another wife from

one of Adam's ribs; and Lilith, to avenge the loss of her demon children, sought to injure all new-born boys the first night of their lives and to injure all baby girls for twenty days after birth.

Because of this legend a superstitious fear possessed mothers in ancient times lest their children be injured by Lilith. To prevent this they attached amulets to their babies, bearing the names of the three angels that sought Adam's first wife.

Brewer, in his «Dictionary of Phrase and Fable,» tells us that some superstitious Jews put in their wives' sleeping rooms four coins labeled with the names of Adam and Eve and the words «Avaunt thee, Lilith,» which words were later corrupted to «lullaby.»

This derivation, accepted as correct by

the «Cyclopedia Metropolitana,» seems extremely fanciful. «Lull,» to soothe or sing to sleep, or «lulla,» a common burden of cradle songs, and «by,» a slumber note, afford a more natural explanation.

SLEEP, BABY, SLEEP

MANY lullabies have a distinctly pious wording. Among such is the charming «Sleep, Baby, Sleep,» set to music by Wagner in «Siegfried»:

SLEEP, Baby, sleep, -
Your father tends the sheep;
Your mother shakes the branches small
Whence happy dreams in showers fall.
Sleep, Baby, sleep.

Sleep, Baby, sleep, -
The sky is full of sheep;
The stars the lambs of heaven are
For whom the shepherd moon doth care.
Sleep, Baby, sleep.

Sleep, Baby, sleep, -
The Christ-Child owns a sheep;
He is Himself the Lamb of God;
The world to save, to death He trod.
Sleep, Baby, sleep.

Sleep, Baby, sleep, -
I'll give you then a sheep
With pretty bells, and you shall play
And frolic with him all the day.
Sleep, Baby, sleep.

Sleep, Baby, sleep, -
And do not bleat like sheep,
Or like the shepherd's dog will bite
My naughty little, crying sprite.
Sleep, Baby, sleep.

Countess Evelyn Martinengo-Cesaresco says that this is the most popular of all German lullabies, - a truly Teutonic mixture of piety, wonder-lore and hominess.

As the baby drops off into quiet slumber, the mother is supposed to sing the final stanza:

Sleep, Baby, sleep, -
Begone, and watch the sheep,
You naughty little dog; begone,
And do not wake my little one.
Sleep, Baby, sleep.

SWEET BABY, SLEEP: WHAT AILS MY DEAR?

ANOTHER religious lullaby was written in England three hundred years ago by George Wither. His desire was to help mothers and nurses and acquaint them and the children with «The loving care and kindness of their Heavenly Father,» in a lullaby which could be «profitably used as a substitute for the unprofitable foolish nursery songs» then in vogue.

So he wrote:

SWEET Baby, sleep: what ails my dear?
What ails my darling thus to cry?

Be still, my child, and lend thine ear
  To hear me sing thy lullaby.
My pretty lamb, forbear to weep;
Be still, my dear; sweet Baby, sleep.

Thou blessed soul, what canst thou fear?
  What thing to thee can mischief do?
Thy God is now thy Father dear,
  His Holy Spouse thy Mother too.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet Baby, sleep.

Whilst thus thy lullaby I sing
  For thee great blessings ripening be:
Thine eldest Brother is a King
  And hath a kingdom bought for thee.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet Baby, sleep.

THE BABY CHILD OF MARY

AMONG Catholic lullabies, this from Spain is of unusual interest because of the presumed service rendered by St. Joseph, St. Anne and St. Joachim:

THE BABY, Child of Mary,
  Now cradle He has none;
His father is a carpenter,
  And he shall make Him one.

The lady good St. Anne,
  The lord St. Joachim,
They rock the Baby's cradle
  That sleep may come to Him.

Then sleep thou too, my baby,
  My little heart so dear:
The Virgin is beside thee,
  The Son of God is near.

LULLABY, MY LITTLE ONE

FAMILIAR and beautiful, this patriotic lullaby from Roumania shows the old-time superstitious belief in charms:

LULLABY, my little one,
Thou art mother's darling son:
Loving mother will defend thee;
Mother she will rock and tend thee
Like a flower of delight

Or an angel swathed in white.

Sleep with mother, mother well
Knows the charm for every spell.
Thou shalt be a hero as
Our good lord great Stephen was,
Brave in war and strong in hand
To protect thy fatherland.

Sleep, my baby, in thy bed:
God upon thee blessings shed.
Be thou dark, and be thine eyes
Bright as stars that gem the skies.
Maiden's love be thine, and sweet
Blossoms spring beneath thy feet.

HUSH YE, HUSH YE, LITTLE PET YE!

RARE indeed are the slumber-songs referring to contemporary personages.

Lord James Douglas (1286-1330), who reconquered Scotland from the English, was known on account of his character as «The Good Sir James,» and from his dark complexion as «The Black Douglas.» His daring exploits under Bruce made him so feared that in an age when mothers often secured the obedience of self-willed children by making them believe that if they were naughty they would be kidnapped, the threat «The Black Douglas is coming!» became common over all England.

Our forebears never tired of telling how Douglas and his men, concealed in cloaks to resemble animals, crept on all fours in the dusk to the strong castle of Roxburgh, which they took by surprise when its defenders were feasting on Fasten's-Eve before Lent.

On a lone turret away from the struggle a lady sat holding her child and crooning:

HUSH ye, hush ye,
Little pet ye!

Hush ye, hush ye,
Do not fret ye!
The Black Douglas
Shall not get ye!

«Do not be so sure of that!» said a gruff voice, while a mailed gauntlet fell on her shoulder. But the brave Douglas in his triumph harmed neither mother nor child.

ROCK-A-BY, BABY

OF the common cradle-songs, «Rock-a-By, Baby» was originally designed to quiet a child to sleep while it was being rocked in a cradle suspended, as in olden times, from the limb of a tree. Though intended to soothe the little one to rest, the words, if understood, are rather fitted to fill its mind with apprehension:

ROCK-A-BY, Baby, on the tree top!
or - HUSH-A-BY

When the wind blows the cradle will rock;
When the bough breaks the cradle will fall,
And down will come Baby, - bough, cradle
and all!

The first line has been called a corruption of the French nurses' threat in the fable, «Hush! there's a wolf!» Accordingly it should be rendered, «Be baw Baby low, on a tree top.» The claim does not seem well authenticated, though the Warwickshire version favors it, which reads:

HUSH-A-BE-BO, on a tree top!

Though the rhyme dates far back into history, it is probably not so old as:

ROCK-A-BY, Baby! thy cradle is green:
Father a nobleman, mother a queen.

With this compare the modern:

HUSH-A-BY, Baby!
Daddy is near:

Mamma is a lady,
And that's very clear.

BY, BABY BUNTING

MRS. GODFREY, in her «English Children,» calls «Baby Bunting» the «earliest known lullaby,» although its author and date cannot be ascertained.

Its wording is as follows, though the first line is sometimes «Be baw bunting» or the skin that of a bear or lamb:

BY, Baby Bunting!
Daddy's gone a-hunting
To get a little rabbit-skin
To wrap the little baby in.

It pictures a fond mother bending over her child as she sways its swaddled form in her arms to induce sleep and weaves the endearing epithet of «bunting» into her song. A curious version varies thus:

Father's gone a-hunting;
Mother's gone a-milking;
Sister's gone a-silking;
Brother's gone to buy a skin
To wrap the Baby Bunting in.

In olden times English babies were wrapped in swaddling bands, the ends of which were brought over the little one's head like a hood and kept in place by ribbons. The practice of swaddling infants to prevent their deforming themselves by the free use of their limbs is still common in some parts of Europe.

HUSH THEE, MY BABY

ONE more old English song should be mentioned; for unlike other lullabies it is supposed to be sung not by the mother, but by the father, who is taking care of the baby in his wife's absence. Its tenor indicates a desire to be relieved of the charge:

HUSH thee, my baby!
Lie ſtill with thy daddy.
Thy mammy has gone to the mill
To bring thee some wheat
To make thee some meat.
Oh, my dear baby, do lie ſtill!

Variant lines, easily placed, are:

HUSH-A-BY, Baby!
To get some meal to bake a cake.
So pray, my dear baby, lie ſtill!

BABY, GO TO SLEEP

MOTHERS often find it difficult to induce their little ones to sleep, and when soothing tones and coaxing have failed, are prone at times to become impatient. An old German lullaby seems to have been written especially for the use of such wearied mothers, though this also, if the child but understood its threat, would be more likely to cause wakefulness and watching than slumber. It runs thus:

BABY, go to sleep!
or - SLEEP, Baby, sleep!
Mother has two little sheep:
or - I can see two little sheep:
One is black and one is white.
If you do not sleep tonight,
First the black and then the white
Will give your little toes a bite.

Prayer Rhymes

PRAYER RHYMES

SOME of the most beautiful rhymes in the anthology of childhood are prayers. We will speak of three:

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE AND JOHN

IN far-off days children as well as adults were haunted by the fear of devils, and often prayed God and saints and guardian angels to watch over them in sleep and to protect their souls should they die, lest evil spirits carry them away.

The «Matthew, Mark, Luke and John» rhyme was probably the child's bedtime prayer in Queen Mary's reign. The little one was taught to recite the «Paternoster» and «Hail Mary» and then this prayer to the Evangelists, adding the «Apostles' Creed» as he grew older.

The original form here given predates the Reformation:

FOUR corners to my bed;
Four angels round my head,
One to watch and two to pray
And one to bear my soul away.

Another form found in «Candle in the Dark,» published in 1655, runs:

MATTHEW, Mark, Luke and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on;
And blessed Guardian Angel, keep
Me safe from danger while I sleep.

It will be observed that the earlier rendering partakes of the nature of a charm, while the second is a prayer. The following Suffolk rhyme is more extended:

MATTHEW, Mark, Luke and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on.
Four corners to my bed,
Four angels at its head,
or - Four angels all aspread,
One to watch and two to pray,
One to bear my soul away.
God within and God without,
Sweet Jesus Christ all round about.
If I die before I wake
I pray to God my soul to take.

The first two lines of the Suffolk form are not in the original one, and the last two are substantially the same as in the child's prayer «Now I lay me.»

Here are two old couplets that seem to be parodies of the «Matthew, Mark, Luke and John» rhyme and that may have been written during the Puritan domination in England:

MATTHEW, Mark, Luke and John,
Hold the horse that I leap on.

MATTHEW, Mark, Luke and John,
Take a ſtick and lay upon.

GENTLE JESUS, MEEK AND MILD

SUNG in the days of Charlemagne (A. D. 742-814) and repeated by one generation after another because of its quaint expression, its purity of thought and its adaptation to childhood, the beautiful evening prayer rhyme for children quoted below is familiar to all. Mothers have sung it to their children and the children have been taught to sing it for themselves for more than a thousand years.

The firſt ſtanza is believed to have been derived from the «White Paternoſter»:

GENTLE Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child:

Pity my simplicity,
Suffer me to come to Thee.

It has been falsely attributed to Pope Leo III., who ruled the church from 795 to 816 A. D. It is said to be found in his «Enchiridion Leonis Papae,» printed in 1532 and described as an unauthorized book of magic used by charlatans and ecclesiastical quacks to support their claims among ignorant people, and containing various prayers, hymns and charms to be used in warding off the influence of evil spirits.

The story carries its own refutation in that it represents the supreme authority of the church as writing an unauthorized book for the use of quacks. «Enchiridia» are convenient collections of ritual and summaries of doctrine. Historically there is no evidence of any among the writings of Pope Leo III., although several are known to have been in use at that time, or of any printed in 1532, although that of Martin Luther was published in 1529.

The stanza has also, I believe, been attributed to Charles Wesley and to Isaac Watts, but its real author is unknown.

«Pity my simplicity» is a line that has been justly criticized. «Why should a child,» it is asked, «petition God to pity its simplicity when simplicity is the charm and glory of childhood?»

The second stanza is not so old, yet it is appropriate and may well be quoted:

> FAIN I would to Thee be brought,-
> Lamb of God, forbid it not;
> In the kingdom of Thy grace
> Give this little child a place.

NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP

IT is fitting, in closing, to say something about the universal prayer of childhood which little ones learn at their mother's knee, hold in lifelong memory and still repeat in maturity, in many cases until old age:

NOW I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take.

To this may be added the line:

This I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

which is not so old as the original prayer, but was probably written soon after it.

The prayer has been in use for at least two and a half centuries. Its purity of thought, simplicity of expression and hallowed associations have caused it to be regarded as a devotional classic, and it is often used in connection with the Lord's Prayer.

Its author is unknown. Whoever he was, he must have been not only deeply religious, but one who understood children; for with the exception of a single word the stanza is composed of monosyllables. Some one, believing that all the words should be monosyllables, tried to amend the third line thus:

> If I die and do not wake

which does not in the least improve it.

The first appearance of this prayer was in some of the later editions of the «New England Primer,» which leads to the conclusion that the author was an American,-an assumption justified by the fact that it is not found in any English book prior to its appearance in this country.

It has been attributed to Isaac Watts, but is nowhere found in his writings, and the reason why it is said to have been one of his poems is easily explained by the fact that it usually followed his cradle song in the «New England Primer.»

The two concluding lines of the Suffolk rendering of the old «Matthew, Mark, Luke and John» prayer rhyme on Page 233 predate the Reformation and indicate that the author compiled «Now I Lay Me» at least in part from earlier forms.

NO one can conceive the wide influence that these four lines have had over the lives of men. «I do not believe,» said Dr John Todd,« that there are four lines in the English language not inspired which have had so much influence in forming human character.» Further, referring to the unknown author, he said, «His name has not come down to us, but he has done more for the good of his race than if he had commanded the victorious armies of Waterloo.»

John Newton, author of many hymns, was led by this child's prayer to forsake a profligate life. Dr. Eliphalet Nott, for sixty years president of Union College, Schenectady, N. Y., wove its lines into family worship. Father Taylor, the sailor preacher, whispered it with his dying breath, and President John Quincy Adams offered it to God as an evening supplication throughout his eventful life.

It is customary for many, perhaps most, persons to begin the second and fourth lines «I pray the Lord,» dropping erroneously into alternating rhythm and changing the solemn petition into a mere statement of fact.

It is not surprising that this prayer, so wonderfully adapted to infant lips and so broadly catholic in its spirit, should have been translated into many languages.

Another child's prayer, often used in Scotland, closely resembles this, and may fittingly be quoted:

THIS night, when I lie down to sleep,
I gi'e my soul to Christ to keep.
I wake a' noo, I wake a' never,
I gi'e my soul to Christ forever. Amen.

NOTE ON "LUCY LOCKET"

The tune to which "Lucy Locket" was fitted is of peculiar interest to Americans as being that to which "Yankee Doodle" was written at Fort Crale opposite Albany, N. Y., in 1755, by Dr. Richard Schuckburgh, a wit of the British army, in derision of the motley auxiliary Colonial troops.

Its origin is obscure. Like the music of most of our familiar songs and hymns, it can be traced back to Germany, but the air may have traveled westward from central Asia to become a folk-song of central Europe.

To this tune the Cavaliers wrote a satire on Oliver Cromwell, who rode into Oxford on a tiny horse and with a great plume in his hat. Their ditty may have suggested how

"Yankee Doodle came to town,
Riding on a pony;
Stuck a feather in his crown
And called him macaroni."

The last word meant then what "dude" does now, and the incongruous aspect of Cromwell's attempt at finery may be appreciated by looking at any good portrait of him.

"Doodle" is provincial English for "a simple fellow," but the Yankees adopted Schuckburgh's poem, added various lines, and roared it out at Bunker Hill and many a Revolutionary battlefield until the fall of 1781, when the soldiers of Cornwallis stacked their arms in surrender at Yorktown, Va., and England lost a nation to the notes of

"Lucy Locket lost her pocket."

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